

## FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

## **A Study of Power in relation to the Implementation of Curriculum Policy, with particular reference to the use of Contract**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores the powers exercised by government as it attempts to transform educational policy into practice. It originates from an interest in the TVEI programme, administered for the government by the Manpower Services Commission during the 1980s. The engine for this rapid modification of existing practice in both school and college appeared to relate to the device of funding on the basis of contract. This observation led to an attempt to analyze the range of powers available to central government and others. This required both a historical and a comparative analysis, together with a concern for the way in which human behaviour is shaped by specific power relationships.

Chapter 1 sets out the origins of the study and establishes a model of the "bases of power". Thereafter, Chapters 2 and 3 consider the extent to which government has held or extended its grip on these different types of power during this century. Chapter 2 deals separately with 1918 to 1939, and 1944 to 1974. After reviewing the model in the light of those accounts, Chapter 3 examines the period from 1974 to the Education Reform Act of 1988.

Having established the increasing significance of "remunerative" power based on categorical or contractual funding, Chapter 4 argues that such strategies contain certain key elements : namely, criteria, bid, contract, monitoring, evaluation and replication. Using this analytical tool, Chapters 5, 6 and 7 examine three illustrative cases, starting with the TVEI programme from which the enquiry originated. Chapter 6 examines the impact of a similar funding strategy within the reorganisation of INSET, while Chapter 7 draws on a detailed research study of similar initiatives within higher education.

In Chapter 8 an attempt is made to draw together the argument, to relate it to the ever expanding use of contract across the range of social policy and, finally, to consider the implications of this undeniably efficient mode of policy implementation for an avowedly democratic society.

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Rationale and structure

This thesis is traditional in intent and style. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a thesis as "a proposition laid down or stated, especially as a theme to be discussed and proved, or to be maintained against attack". What follows is an argument, supported by evidence which is variable in origin but, I hope, effective in constructing a theory about evolving policy implementation. It represents an attempt to do what Janet Finch describes as the task of qualitative social science ; namely, to conceptualise what has previously been an unconnected series of events (Finch, 1986). As such it does not claim to produce a 'truth' about modes of policy implementation, nor to set out the results of a detailed empirical study ; rather it aims to put forward a rational, defensible and useful set of ideas through which to achieve a clearer understanding of past events and future developments.

Before going into more detail about the content of the thesis, I want to look further at the arguments put forward by Finch. Her book deals with the relationship between policy-related research and policy-making itself. While the impact of the one upon the other has been minimal, she argues that the disappointment and frustration around this apparent failure grows out of a faulty understanding of their actual and potential relationship. Thus she argues for an 'enlightenment' rather than an 'engineering' model. Drawing on the work of a number of others, she suggests that "research is rarely used instrumentally in individual decisions" but rather is "most likely to make an impact on policy in an indirect way by creating an 'agenda of concern'" (op cit, p148). Evidence suggests that policy makers use research in an eclectic fashion, seeing it as a means of keeping up to date with informed opinion in the area of their responsibility.

Later she quotes Weiss (1982) who says that research :

*influences (policy-makers') conceptualizations of the issues with which they deal ... it widens the range of options which they consider ; it challenges some taken-for-granted assumptions ... This kind of conceptual contribution is not easy to see. It is not visible to the naked eye.*

*(quoted in Finch, 1986, p 152)*

In later chapters, Finch sets out an agenda for policy-related qualitative research which accepts and addresses this role while not neglecting the opportunity to make critical and challenging interventions when and where appropriate.

This study has much in common with the approach advocated by Finch. While a thesis addresses an audience which is not itself directly involved in the policy-making process, the ideas put forward in this study have grown out of concern for and commentary upon educational and curriculum policy. The thesis provides space and time to refine the conceptualizations around the developments studied. If that process is successful, it can feed back into arenas where its influence may be a little closer to the action.

The issue to be addressed is, then, concerned with the implementation of educational policy. It will be argued later in this chapter that it is impossible to separate decisions relating to educational provision from their implications for what young people actually learn, and so the ultimate impact of all educational policy is upon the curriculum, whether or not it is the explicit focus. The emphasis throughout the chapters which follow will be on strategies of implementation rather than on the formulation or indeed the quality of the policies themselves. The intention is to provide an account which is as far as possible descriptive and analytical rather than normative. Much educational commentary is, perhaps inevitably, concerned to be prescriptive, for education is essentially a value-laden activity. But this thesis endeavours to reserve normative commentary to the conclusion.

There are two observations to make about this decision. First, implementation strategies are concerned with means rather than ends. That does not excuse them from moral criticism. It is, however, better that such criticism is based on a careful exploration of the processes involved; and hence normative conclusions should be based on analysis rather than intuitive approval or disapproval. Second, the delay in reaching a normative critique does not and will not preclude the judgemental because, in reviewing the varied impact of implementation strategies, there are inevitably points at which effects must be seen as positive, negative, or at least problematic.

Medieval scholarship recognised a distinction between "*ordo inveniendum*", the route by which one comes to a particular way of seeing, knowing or understanding something ; and "*ordo demonstrandum*", the way in which one chooses - or needs - to demonstrate or communicate that discovery. To explain the structure of what follows, I

need to set out the distinction which exists between the chronological process through which I developed the argument contained in these pages and the order in which I now seek to communicate it.

My initial interest in the topic came about as a result of involvement in the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), announced by the government in 1982 and implemented in 1983. That initiative is the focus of Chapter 5. Those working in the field of curriculum studies were both intrigued and horrified by this bold programme, managed from outside the education system and bringing rich resources into a somewhat arid environment. In order to observe what was happening from inside rather than outside a major development, I sought and found various contracts to act as a local evaluator. As a result I have had first hand involvement of this kind in three LEAs and close contact with several more; I also became involved with networks of local and national evaluators, and contributed to their seminars and publications; with officials from the sponsoring agency, the Manpower Services Commission; and with many LEA co-ordinators and other project staff. TVEI also provided me with privileged access to a large number of schools and colleges. The data on which I can draw for an analysis of this programme is therefore a rich personal archive of documents, published and unpublished, field notes and personal encounters, together with nearly a decade's first hand experience of both the initiative and of reactions to it. Part of this data is reflected in Chapter 5 ; some is directly visible through references and quotations : much more is transmuted into my overall analysis and commentary.

Commentary about TVEI has tended to focus on curriculum content and pedagogy, together with issues of institutional management and staff development. Such topics made up the bulk of my own evaluation work. But beyond that, as a university teacher concerned with broader issues about curriculum development, I was increasingly concerned to analyze the reasons for the effectiveness of the programme, how and why TVEI had made such a rapid and extensive impact on the workings of a system previously chiefly characterised by its inertia. In the early eighties we were watching the death agonies of the Schools Council ; for years we had been debating curriculum development strategies with our advanced course students and endeavouring to account for the successes (some) and the failures (more) of that agency (Steadman et al, 1980). Why was TVEI so manifestly effective when other, ostensibly better founded, projects had made little impact ?

A popular answer concerned "the money". However, I became increasingly convinced that the secret lay not so much in the resources themselves as in the manner of their distribution. I related this to the notion of 'categorical funding' developed in the "Title" programmes spawned by the Education and Science Act of 1965 in the USA (Atkin and House, 1981). Under this Act, designated funds were made available to those willing and able to deliver programmes which met the Federal government's rather specific policy intentions of countering social and economic deprivation through educational programmes. The effectiveness of such specific funding was well attested by Pincus in a study for the Rand Corporation (Pincus, 1973).

The distinguishing characteristic of such funding strategies, at least as they were evolving in Britain and notably in the hands of the MSC, seemed to be the existence of a contract, formal or merely implicit, between the sponsor and the agency undertaking to deliver the specified programme. I therefore published several papers from 1985 onwards (Harland, 1985; 1987a; 1987b) in which I attempted to analyze the components of such a contract as far as I could determine them through observing the operation of the TVEI scheme. Chapter 4 contains an exposition of the model I developed at that time and have subsequently refined.

From this interest in the operation of categorical funding and the emergence of contract as a potent mode of policy implementation, there emerged, more or less simultaneously, two further questions : how far did this strategy represent a change, an innovation, within the process whereby governments have sought to turn policy into practice ; and where else, if anywhere, were such strategies being used within education ?

To answer the first question requires a historical analysis and this is what occupies Chapters 2 and 3. They cover the years between 1918 and the Education Reform Act of 1988, though the later years are dealt with in much greater detail than the earlier. Thus Chapter 2 covers 1918-1944 and then 1944-1974, while the whole of Chapter 3 is devoted to the remaining fifteen years. The evidence used here is the normal historical material of documents and other primary sources, coupled with critical commentary from secondary sources where appropriate.

The purpose of this historical analysis was to trace the significance of resource management as a tool for securing policy implementation, and hence curriculum change. However, in order not to over-emphasise the significance of resources during

this period, a broader conception of the powers available to central government was needed. Financial powers are, after all, only one aspect of the powers potentially available to government (or for that matter to any agency which seeks to shape the behaviour of others). An obvious candidate for this theoretical under-pinning was Margaret Archer's 'resource dependency theory'. Archer argues that "educational politics" comprise three different types of negotiation : 'internal initiation' in which change is generated within the educational system; 'external transaction' in which change emerges as a result of inter-action between internal and external pressure groups ; and 'political manipulation' which "is the principal resort of those who have no other means of gaining satisfaction for their educational demands" (Archer, 1981). The relationships which develop within this nexus, and the deals that are struck, depend upon differential access to resources and the consequent creation of a structure of dependencies. Resources consist of finance, authority, and expertise. Each party to the exchange process will endeavour to maintain and extend their existing resources but each is involved in mutual, though unequal, relationships of dependency.

The relevance of this theory to the present task is obvious but it is difficult to use because of its high level of generality. Take, for example, the following statements:

*The principal resource commanded by the education profession is its expertise.*

*The principal resource commanded by external pressure groups is their wealth ...*

*The principal resource commanded by political authorities (both central and local) is their legal authority and capacity to impose negative sanctions*

*(Archer, 1981, p34 ff)*

Such statements seem to suggest, contrary to experience, a monolithic identity within any one identified "actor" in the exchange relationship, implying that all teachers or all LEAs are united in a single disposition. They also appear to carve up available resources in a fixed and inflexible manner, whereas what is interesting is the degree to which any of the parties retain, develop, use, or indeed lose, resources that they may once have held.

A large part of the argument within this thesis will be concerned with this last point. Thus, although what follows has undoubtedly been influenced by the work of Archer, a more useful model has been derived from organisation theory. It is drawn from the work of Bacharach and Lawler who formulated a theory concerning the four "bases of power" which operate within an organisation. While their work relates mainly to

individual institutions, it did not prove difficult to apply their ideas to a relatively closed 'system' such as education.

The model will be described initially in the closing pages of this chapter. It plays an increasingly significant part as the historical analysis progresses : in the section on 1918-44 it suggests themes to explore within a necessarily superficial account ; for 1944-74 and again for 1974-88 it provides the framework for the analysis, undergoing further refinement as the account progresses.

Historical questions about the use of resources in the cause of policy implementation seem naturally to precede the detailed account of the programme, namely TVEI, from which the whole enquiry emerged. Thus, to summarise, the two historical chapters (2 and 3) produce an interim conclusion about the changing style of resource allocation and its increasing significance for policy implementation. This leads to a theoretical chapter (Chapter 4) in which the nature of categorical funding and its constituent parts is discussed and a model proposed. There follows a chapter (Chapter 5) which exemplifies and illustrates the operation of that model in the case of TVEI.

The thesis then turns to the second of the questions which emerged from my early attempts to understand the workings of contract within TVEI : where else, if anywhere were similar strategies in use within education ? Chapters 6 and 7 therefore explore two areas in which such strategies play a prominent part, namely the transformation of policy relating to the in-service education and training of serving teachers (INSET), and the whole area of funding for higher education (HE).

These two chapters employ rather different kinds of data. Chapter 6, dealing with INSET, was largely drawn from documentary analysis, supplemented by professional contacts with inter-LEA groups such as the North Thames In-service Network, a group of 17+ LEA INSET co-ordinators; I also refer to a range of discussions and semi-formal interviews with individual LEA personnel. Despite extensive searches (including in the DES's own library), little evaluative material and even less secondary critique on the "new INSET" is available even though the programme was launched in 1986 : the reasons why this is so are themselves material and will be dealt with during the discussion. The account that is offered here is therefore, however modest, something of a pioneering effort to construct an over-view of the scheme, its operation and its underlying policy intentions.

Chapter 7, on the other hand, benefits from a rich vein of empirical data, drawn from a DES funded research programme looking into New Funding Mechanisms in Higher Education. (1) The final report was based on twenty four in-depth case studies of universities and polytechnics. The topics investigated focused particularly on a series of programmes financed through contracting, and upon HE reaction to the whole process of competitive tendering. Obviously, in the context of this study, it is not possible to do justice to the complexities of the HE funding scene. But the chapter provides an overview of DES policy intentions and a summary of some of the specific programmes funded via strategies of categorical funding which, together with first-hand accounts of HE responses, shows many parallels with the programmes operating in the school sector.

The final chapter (Chapter 8) draws together the threads of the argument. It also considers why, in the light of the evident potency of categorical funding and contract, the government has found it necessary to assume detailed legislative control over the education system. In doing so, it acknowledges the increasing popularity of contract across all areas of social policy and draws attention to some of the apparent cross-party agreements in this area. The connections and contradictions between, on the one hand, this preference for contractual forms of resource allocation, and on the other, the emphasis on choice within the operation of a free market, will be explored.

These themes introduce the main argument within the conclusion which is concerned with the compatibility of contract as a mechanism for the detailed control of the education system with the broader principles of a democratic society. At this point the argument can no longer avoid issues of value and the thesis ends with a switch from questions about how, when, why, and with what effect, to issues about how far we should welcome the apparent efficiency of policy implementation via the sophisticated control of resource allocation.

## **1.2 Theoretical Perspectives**

The remaining tasks for this chapter are concerned with setting out two of the perspectives which underpin the thesis : the proposition that there is no rational basis for distinguishing between policy which focusses on the curriculum and more general educational policy ; and the ideas about the nature of power which have already been mentioned above.

## ***Curriculum policy making***

In the first place, therefore, it should be noted that this thesis will be concerned to demonstrate that the learning experiences of young people, collectively even if not individually, are directly affected by all decisions about what should be provided, developed and distributed within the education system ; and moreover by the style and manner in which those policy decisions are implemented. Thus virtually all educational policy is, directly or indirectly, curriculum policy.

There are many definitions of curriculum itself, each of them encapsulating a specific value position in relation to the aims and goals of schooling. Such definitions vary widely in the extent to which they contain the potential to guide or even determine the course of action. Much curriculum theorizing has virtually ignored the issue of implementation, preferring instead to see disagreement operating at an abstract level rather than manifesting itself as open political conflict. As Kirst and Walker could say, in a paper dating from 1971 :

*...when professional educators write about or study the curriculum, they rarely conceive of their subject in political terms. The words "policy", "politics" and "political" do not even appear in the indices of any of the major textbooks in the field (Tyler, 1949; Smith, Stanley and Shores, 1950; Gwynn, 1960; Taba 1962; Saylor and Alexander, 1966). These authors treated conflict always as conflict among ideas, never as conflict among individuals, interest groups, or factions within school system bureaucracies. One finds consistent acknowledgement of the existence of political influence on curriculum, but no mention of policy or policy-making, nor any attempts to compare and contrast curriculum policy making with other types of public or private policy-making.*  
(Kirst and Walker, 1971, p481)

The political dimension comes into the debate about curriculum when we link the discussion to the concept of policy making; for at that moment we have to realise that some curriculum ideals will prevail and will be reflected, even if only partially, in action while others will be consigned to the lecture room and the academic press. As Kirst and Walker say

*..curriculum is not just influenced by political events; it is a political process in important ways... Throughout curriculum policy making, political conflict is generated by the existence of competing values concerning the proper basis for deciding what to teach. The local school system and the other public agencies responsible for making these decisions must allocate these competing values in some way, even though this means that some factions or interests win and others lose... The inevitability of conflicting demands, wants, and needs is responsible for the necessarily political character of curriculum policy making ....*

(op. cit., p480)



Kirst and Walker's definition is useful in that it allows us to consider curriculum policy making at periods when there was little or no acknowledgement that there was any such thing :

*Among the most important of the specifically educational policies of schools are those pertaining to what children study in school. Children in school are normally required to study certain subjects and forbidden to study others, encouraged to pursue some topics and discouraged from pursuing others, provided with opportunities to study some phenomena but not provided with the means of studying others. When these requirements and pressures are uniformly and consistently operative they amount to policy whether we intended so or not. We shall call such implicit and explicit guides to action curriculum policy and the process of arriving at such policy we shall call curriculum policy-making.*

*(op. cit., p479)*

According to this definition, "specifically educational policies" relate to a totality of expectations about what children should study and by extension, which children should study what, in what institutions and for how long. Such expectations are operationalised by the provision of resources and opportunities for such studies, and also constrained in various ways, sometimes by specific prohibition but more frequently by the non-provision of the appropriate facilities. Thus we might point to the expectation in the United States that the majority of high school students should receive driver education and the consequent provision of facilities and instructors; and this can be contrasted with the absence of similar expectations and therefore resources in Britain. Kirst and Walker claim that "When these requirements and pressures are uniformly and consistently operative they amount to policy, whether we intended so or not" (my italics). Thus we can argue that in any society where there is a set of norms and expectations about the content of a state sponsored (not necessarily provided) education system, then that state has a curriculum policy. That policy may, of course, be implicit as well as explicit. Thus, when the time comes to make specific changes in the norms and expectations surrounding the process of schooling (as for example, in the role and responsibilities of teachers or local authority personnel), there takes place a process of curriculum policy making, though again the process itself may be more or less self-conscious.

This is perhaps the key to a more sophisticated way of understanding the nature of curriculum policy making and hence control than can be achieved by a simple attempt to locate the power of decision on a given issue. To attribute responsibility for curriculum policy change, it is important not to assume that decisions are made in a vacuum and therefore that an apparent freedom to make a decision indicates the location

of power. Scope for the promotion or denigration of specific norms and expectations and the capacity to influence how these will be selectively re-inforced by the provision of opportunities and resources are more significant indicators of power than responsibility for decision making, because they determine the all-important framework within which decisions are made. They are therefore a crucially important part of the curriculum policy making process.

### ***The 'Bases' of Power***

My second task, in this concluding section of the Introduction, is to set out the model of power which will form the basis for the historical analysis in Chapters 2 and 3 and upon which I will later build an elaborated account of that kind of power relating to resource allocation.

Much of the extensive literature on the nature of power draws a distinction between two distinct categories : authority and influence. Both have clearly been of considerable significance in the history of curriculum policy making in Britain though at any one time the balance has shifted between them. But if we are to examine these fluctuations, it would be useful to explore the two concepts more fully.

For the purpose of this argument it is necessary to offer some definitions though I can only hint at the long history of debate which lies behind each one. I shall use 'authority' to mean the power which is implicit in hierarchical structures where there is always at least the possibility that the superior can take steps to enforce his will legitimately upon the subordinate. In Weber's widely quoted definition from The Theory of Social and Economic Organisations (1947)

*Power is the probability that a person can carry out his or her own will despite resistance.*

'Influence' on the other hand is more subtle, is multi-dimensional, and consists of a capacity to affect action without resort to, or even a right to use, sanctions. As such it depends on a range of situational and inter-active factors. Bierstedt (1950) has stressed that influence is inherently persuasive and desired outcomes are therefore achieved through the voluntary submission of others : in contrast, power (as authority) is essentially co-ercive and submission is normally involuntary, even where it is maintained that such subordination is willingly conceded as part of some form of social contract.

Many of those who have written about the power of the DES and its predecessors have explored both their authority and their influence. In the past it was commonly suggested (see, for example, Broadfoot 1986) that the DES lacked power in the sense of authority despite its right to make certain kinds of decisions, use certain sanctions and threaten the possibility of legislation.

By the end of the 1980s the situation had changed and the DES had assumed all the authority that it might conceivably need to implement government policy. But much of this thesis is concerned with the many ways in which it had succeeded in extending its powers short of assuming the absolutism sanctioned by the Education Reform Act of 1988. It has often been argued that the DES and its predecessors have actually preferred to promote policies by exploiting their very considerable influence, thereby securing compliance without resort to crude coercion. Among these, the power to determine and then to administer resource allocation has proved very significant.

In so far as the education system has generally conceded the right of government to shape policy, even where no coercion was involved, we see at work the 'politics of deference'. Such deferential behaviour is often remarked as a feature of the British education system, where subordinates make assumptions about the actual authority of their superiors which lead them to defer - sometimes even unnecessarily - to the wishes of central government. In an essay on the problems of defining social power, Wrong describes very exactly this phenomenon :

*A party can have power without using it. The compliance of possible targets is often based on their subjective expectation that potential can and will be used when necessary.*

*(Wrong, 1968)*

However it is not by any means clear that central government has over a period consistently preferred the exercise of influence rather than direct authority. This will be an issue of considerable importance in the historical analysis.

The argument in this thesis will return at several points to the issue of influence and specifically to the so-called 'politics of deference', but at this point I want to refer to the work of Bacharach and Lawler who have offered some useful distinctions in the concept of power that can illuminate the various strategies by which central government has endeavoured to guide the curriculum of schools and colleges. Drawing on other theorists, they distinguish and describe four 'bases' of power, which are defined as "what parties control that enables them to manipulate the behaviour of others" :

*The co-ercive base of power is the control of punishment; the remunerative base is the control of rewards; the normative base is the control of symbols; and the knowledge base is the control of information.*

*(Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p36)*

We can readily extend these categories to fit the particular case of central government departments : the co-ercive clearly relates not only to punishments (sanctions) but also to the legitimate enactment of legislation and the whole gamut of regulations and administrative memoranda, all of which carry the implication of penalty for acts of non-compliance ; the remunerative covers the area of resources in cash or kind, and the fact that they can be both distributed and with-held ; the symbolic rewards of the normative base can be understood as the bestowal of public recognition and the marks of official approval; and the knowledge base which concerns the control of information can be seen in activities as widely varied as monitoring, testing, inspection, commissioned research and the collection of statistical data.

For Bacharach and Lawler those with authority have structural access to all these four bases of power. Those with influence alone have only partial and situational access; and in particular, they are excluded from power based on the control of remuneration (i.e. resources).

In the next two chapters, I intend to combine the insights of Kirst and Walker about the nature of curriculum policy making with the analysis of the four bases of power offered by Bacharach and Lawler to provide a framework for the historical account outlined in the opening sentences of this chapter. That is to say, I propose to assert that even at a period when curriculum policy-making was not seen as an explicit objective, it can nonetheless be examined by deducing the norms and expectations of schooling which emerge from government action and inaction. I then propose to use the Bacharach and Lawler taxonomy as a means of sub-dividing the notion of authority/influence in a way which allows me to examine what kind of power central government has or has not had in each period, and also to attempt to describe how this has changed over time. As Bacharach and Lawler say

*Any power relationship in an organisation can encompass all of these bases but each relationship may well be characterized by one of them rather than another.*

*(op.cit., p36)*

To conclude therefore, I have a matrix structure which permits an examination, as appropriate, of each of the periods identified in Chapters 2 and 3 : first, in terms of

shifts in norms and expectations as indicated by particular developments; and then, through an account of the differential exercise of authority/influence as demonstrated through the use of coercive power, the control of resources, the allocation of symbolic rewards, and the production and use of knowledge and information. Thereafter, as already described in the earlier part of this chapter, I shall turn specifically to the use of resources ; in other words, to an elaboration of the remunerative base.

#### Footnotes

1. During the academic year 1988-89, I was a member of the research team for this project which was based in the Centre for Higher Education Studies at the University of London Institute of Education. I was invited to participate because of my known interest in contract and in the development of new forms of funding for INSET, one of the topics which the DES specified for attention. I conducted three of the case studies - in a university, a polytechnic and a free-standing teacher training college. With the permission of the Project Director, I am also able to draw upon findings from all 24 case studies completed by members of the team, and also the Final Report to which I contributed the chapter on Continuing Education and INSET.

## Chapter Two

# SHAPING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM : 1918 - 1944

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a mainly historical account but it does so within the context of a project which seeks to be explanatory and not merely descriptive. Ranson (1985) argues that any attempt to interpret the kind of changes with which this thesis is concerned "must undertake theoretical rather than merely descriptive work". He goes on to say

*Narrative without explanation is not vacuous but necessarily incomplete. Yet .. much of the literature in educational administration ... eschews analytical work and is pre-occupied instead with description of the legal and administrative framework within which services must operate, or with empirical accounts of the way services may vary. The study of public sector services and institutions is an undernourished area theoretically.*

*What we can expect from theory is the discovery of an underlying pattern which has previously been inaccessible to everyday experience and which therefore illuminates the relations of causal dependence between institutions, activities and events.....*

*(Ranson, 1985, p 112)*

Following Weber (1949) and his own earlier work on organisational structuring (Ranson et al, 1980), he goes on to argue that

*a cogent theory .. should be adequate at the levels of meaning and causality so as to embrace three integrated modes of analysis: phenomenological, comparative and temporal".*

To meet the phenomenological criterion, the analysis will need to address the way in which those involved make sense of their experiences, and by their actions and reactions shape the way in which organisational systems develop. The comparative mode in turn addresses the contextual framework and constraints, and considers similar events in related activities. The temporal mode "focuses on the historical development ... (involving) the discovery through time of underlying structures of social relationships whose constitutive political processes account for the structural relationships that we wish to explain".

Ranson's argument presents a formidable challenge to any study of educational policy-making. This thesis attempts to meet it, at least to some degree, with the aim

of moving from description towards "the discovery of an underlying pattern". Later chapters will deal with a number of examples of the use of contract and other related strategies in the implementation of educational policy in order to meet the criterion of comparability ; and those accounts will endeavour to handle the phenomenological level by attempting to analyze the way in which such strategies were perceived and experienced by those concerned. In this and the next chapter, however, the focus will be upon the historical (the temporal mode). Here I shall look fairly briefly at the period from 1918 to 1944, and thereafter a little less briefly at the period from 1944 to the early seventies. Chapter 3 will then deal with the years between the mid-seventies and the late eighties.

## **2.2 From 1918 to 1944**

### **2.2.1 The role of central government**

In 1927, two years after completing fourteen years as Permanent Secretary to the Board of Education, Sir Lewis Amherst Selby-Bigge, Bt, KCB, was able to preface his book about the work of the Board with the comment

*...the Central Authority does its business in no Olympian manner. It does not speak in "categorical imperatives". It "superintends" matters relating to education which is mainly provided by local authorities who are much more than its agents, and is imparted by an army of teachers which is not its own army.*

*(Selby-Bigge, 1927, Preface)*

Selby-Bigge goes on to describe in forthright terms his privileged view of the Board's role and relationships. After a short chapter describing the history of the Board, chapter II has the incisive title : "What the Board does not Do". There follow seven pages listing negatives, among which we might note that the Board

- does not itself directly provide, manage or administer any schools or educational institutions (with a few insignificant exceptions);
- has no authority over universities;
- "does not supply or prescribe or proscribe any text books for use in grant aided schools though it may criticise, through its inspectors, the use of unsuitable textbooks as affecting the efficiency of schools";
- has not for many years made a practice of describing in its Regulations, except in general terms, the curriculum of grant-aided schools and the methods of teaching.

- has no general power to interpret the Education Act or to determine questions of law;
- cannot "dissolve LEAs, or appoint persons to perform their duties or exercise their powers";
- does not audit LEA expenditure though it may exclude from the calculation of (percentage) grant specific items of otherwise legitimate local expenditure which fall outside what the Regulations authorise or the Board approves.

It is significant that Selby-Bigge should begin by stressing the negative powers of central government. Such a preference might well have operated at any time for the next fifty years (see, for example, the comments of both Boyle and Crosland in Kogan, 1971). Even when we turn to chapter III, which deals with "the features and aspects of the service of education which at different periods have specially engaged the attention and endeavours of the central Administration", the tentative tone reappears in the title : "What the Board Tries to Do". The identified "features and aspects" are dealt with under the following headings :

- 1) *school provision*
- 2) *school attendance and accessibility*
- 3) *minimum efficiency*
- 4) *value for money*
- 5) *organisation*
- 6) *systematisation.*

(*Selby-Bigge, op.cit, Chap III* )

Selby-Bigge adds that "The idea of expansion of educational facilities has in most periods been prominent" ; but that, sadly, is said to be beyond the scope of the book.

He next turns to the "means by which the Central Authority has tried to attain the objects which have been at different times most in its mind" (and these clearly relate to what has been referred to in Chapter 1 as the "bases of power" or "what parties control which enables them to manipulate the behaviour of others"). Selby-Bigge identifies these means as

- 1) *regulation*
- 2) *inspection (dominated for a considerable period by examination)*
- 3) *the training and recognition of teachers and the regulation of school staffing*
- 4) *the distribution of information and propaganda including all the machinery of inquiry and consultation.*

(*op.cit., p31*)

Each of these 'means' is discussed in a later chapter of his book. However before any of them, there is a long chapter on 'Finance'. It would seem that Selby-Bigge sees this as the pivotal chapter. Curiously, Finance has not appeared among the 'means' and there is a continuing ambivalence about the degree to which the power



over resources is seen as the chief 'base' for the Board's authority. When we come to consider the question of "regulation", however, we shall see that Selby-Bigge stresses the significance of the Board's absolute discretion over the allocation of grant, a discretion which gained in significance as the regulations governing elementary and secondary education became less specific during the twenties.

Reading Simon's detailed account of these years, we might assume that the Board's officers and presumably their political masters saw finance (the 'remunerative base') as the prime regulative mechanism (Simon, 1974). It could be that the Board identified policy targets and then promoted them through financial provision; and conversely killed off alternative objectives by systematic starvation. However the picture that emerges is one in which the control of finance was not, for much of the period, seen as a promotional device geared to the implementation of government educational policy but rather was seen as essentially permissive. The only exception to this might conceivably be found in the two short periods of Labour administration, notably under Trevelyan, when the re-organisation of senior elementary education and the raising of the school leaving age became political priorities.

To describe the financial policy of the period as permissive in character may seem odd because the two decades between the 1918 Education Act and the outbreak of the 1939 war were characterised by attempts to curtail educational spending. However the framework for these economies was the conception that central government's grant support was the green light for LEA expansion of the service : cuts on the other hand represented the red light, the withdrawal of permission. Although LEAs were just as likely to vary in their inclination to spend as they have been in later years, the post 1914-18 mood was towards an ever-enlarging provision whether it were in building elementary schools; in developing senior elementary provision; expanding the secondary system ; reducing class sizes; or paying higher salaries to teachers.

Such expansionist thinking was encouraged by the provisions of the Education Act of 1918. This was passed during the Presidency of H.A.L.Fisher, who had been brought into Lloyd George's coalition with the promise that funds would be made available for a substantial expansion in educational provision. The Act raised the school leaving age to 14 for all children, and promised compulsory part-time education for all 14-16 year olds. However, the major innovation of the Act was the proposal to pay a minimum Exchequer grant of 50% of all local authority expenditure on education. The effect of this 'percentage grant' system was even more generous than it sounds for it had the effect of raising the level of grant to LEAs from 46.9% of

permitted expenditure in 1913 to 56% in 1920. This was very much in accord with Fisher's thinking. In his view, educational progress had been arrested by a lack of financial support; too great a burden was being borne by the rates, too small a proportion by the taxes.

Simon sees this as

*a measure calculated to encourage the more progressive authorities setting the pace for educational advance, no less than those lagging behind to avoid putting too great a burden on the rates.*

*(Simon, 1974, p 16)*

Selby-Bigge considered that the door was being opened too wide, and that the demand for secondary education for all would not be contained and yet could not be afforded. However a departmental committee appointed by Fisher in 1920 to look into the provision of free places in secondary schools recommended that 75% of children should have some form of free secondary education to the age of 16. In the mean-time there was to be an immediate rise in the number of free places available from 25% to 40%, with maintenance allowances for all those over 14, and even for those over 11 who were especially needy.

One month after this report was published in November 1920 (Board of Education, 1920) came the first of the economic crises which were to occur with crippling regularity during these inter-war years. A Select Committee on expenditure described the percentage grant as "impossible to defend" (Simon, op cit, p30); the Board had "no adequate control" over expenditure and indeed was guilty of stimulating increased spending. Such criticism was heavily re-inforced a year later by the Geddes Committee, an ad hoc body made up of business men convened to examine the government's estimates and advise on economies. This committee was required to reduce public expenditure by 30%, largely by reversing the recent and substantial rise in spending on the social services. Its report said

*We consider that the percentage grant should be abandoned in the interests of economy and replaced by fixed grants... We are impressed by the position of impotence of the Board of Education in either controlling expenditure or effecting economies, once the policy has been determined. There is no doubt on the other hand that Local Authorities have been urged into expenditure upon a scale which they would not have contemplated if left free.*

*(quoted in Selby-Bigge, 1927, pp106-7)*

Selby-Bigge thought that they had handled the question of percentage grants "roughly" but he concedes that

*Apart from questions of principle it must be admitted that central grants based on and related to the actual expenditure of Local Authorities on an inherently expansive service are not easy to administer, with due regard to the proper anxiety of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to see ahead, to be furnished in good time with reliable estimates and to be protected against unpleasant surprises*

*(op.cit., p108)*

The Geddes Committee therefore recommended a series of cuts which in various forms were to re-appear in successive economy drives over the years to 1939.

Reading the history of these decades, one rapidly concludes that the government's major pre-occupation with education during this period concerned the issue of finance. Government was increasingly called upon to support a new network of social services which became the seed-bed of the post-war Welfare State. The germination period was filled with doubts and uncertainties as the logic of Keynesian economics came to inform government thinking : the idea that it was government rather than the market which bore responsibility for creating a context for economic stability and growth was inevitably going to lead to previously inconceivable levels of government spending. While the Labour party combined with much of the teaching profession to demand higher levels of social investment, Conservative politicians were less certain. Simon portrays each successive Chancellor of the Exchequer - Austen Chamberlain, Horne, Snowden, Baldwin, Churchill - as holding the line against escalating expenditure, and one has to remember that each was facing economic problems of a scale and intensity which exceeded anything within living memory. The implications for an education system over-ripe for expansion were serious. Writing about the attempt by Lord Eustace Percy to revive the Geddes proposals in 1925 (after a brief period of Labour government during which Charles Trevelyan had tried to "reverse the engines"), Simon describes the period as a continuing "battle to restrain the government from gaining full control of the education system in the interests of the economy".

It can therefore be argued that social spending itself that was the issue of the day, rather more than the specific developments which were enabled or held up by spending decisions. Hence spending - where it occurred - can be described as essentially permissive, and cuts represented the rescinding of permission in the context of a need for economy. The policy intentions behind those new developments which were afforded were therefore less of an issue than has been the case in later years. During the inter-war period, financial support for education operated on a tightrope between, on the one hand, demands for restraint on public expenditure and

on the other, a desire to seek the social and political advantage of acceding to very substantial pressure for reform and expansion. Educational spending was thus not a device for achieving educational ends devised within government as an element within a coherent social and economic policy. Decisions to pay grant and authorise expenditure were essentially about giving freedom and possibly encouragement to local education authorities so that they might implement their own policies.

It is however possible to interpret events rather differently and here we need to look into the related area of regulation(s) ; in other words, the coercive base. From 1895, when the 'payment by results' system was finally ended, the Board steadily retreated from the detailed control of curriculum content. This is clearly acknowledged by Selby-Bigge in his statements about 'What the Board does not Do'. In 1905 that the Elementary Code was replaced by the Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and others concerned with Public Elementary Schools and the Board stated that

*The only uniformity that the Board of Education desire to see is that each teacher shall think for himself, and work out for himself such methods of teaching as may use his powers to the best advantage and be best suited to the particular needs and conditions of the school.*  
(quoted in Lawton and Gordon, 1987)

However, until 1926 the Board continued to stipulate that the time-table and the curriculum of each school were subject to their approval via the inspectorate, and documents setting out the agreed programme, duly endorsed with the Inspector's signature, were displayed in every school. Much has been made of the withdrawal of this requirement in 1926. It is generally agreed that for some years there had been a steady liberalisation of the Board's view of elementary education. This happened as a more child-centred approach to schooling became the new orthodoxy under the influence of such people as Edmond Holmes and, later, Percy Nunn. Thus the famous Hadow committee statement, that the primary curriculum should be thought of in terms of activity and experience, appeared not as a bolt from the blue but rather as the articulation of an increasingly popular view. But the events of 1926 have attracted considerable attention in more recent years and the interpretations proposed have a direct bearing on the issue of curriculum policy. White (1975) has argued that the Board may have been seeking to distinguish elementary from secondary education by the simple device of not de-regulating the latter ; and that this can be seen as an attempt to prevent a second Labour government from promoting its plans for a more inclusive system of secondary schooling. In fact the Labour party had suffered a serious electoral reversal in the autumn of 1924. Furthermore Baldwin, the

Conservative Prime Minister, had himself adopted the Hadow platform. Thus White's hypothesis, while thought-provoking, is no more than that. Powers renounced in Regulations (which of course, were not statutory) could readily be resumed by the next administration, especially one likely to be popular with organised teachers.

A more sweeping analysis of this episode has been advanced by Martin Lawn (1987), an analysis which is to a degree supported by the writings of the two protagonists, Percy and Selby-Bigge. Lawn's argument is that

*It was not a question of moving from a regulated to a de-regulated education system but of moving from a system of direct control to one of indirect control.*

Lawn supports this by quoting from an essay of Percy's written in 1922 in which he suggests that the administrative system had become "too over-burdened and too complicated for efficiency" and that what was needed was a more "exact" administration which would have the freedom to concentrate on the "vitally important sphere of high policy". Lawn suggests that Percy had been influenced by the ideas of Lugard, the colonial administrator, who had developed a strategy of 'indirect rule' in Northern Nigeria. Lawn discusses the "probability" that by 1926, Percy was already familiar with these ideas as published by Lugard in 1924 and that he was actively working for a form of indirect and yet potent control over Local Authorities, where a loose authority could be re-inforced by sanctions over resources. Much of the evidence for this comes from Percy's memoirs, published in 1958, the year he died, and it is probable that Lawn is not making sufficient allowance for *ex post facto* rationalisation in the final months of a public life, nor giving adequate recognition to all that Percy might have learned and thought in the succeeding years, both in political life and subsequently as Vice-Chancellor at Newcastle University.

Lawn does however find some strong support in the writings of Selby-Bigge, published only a year after the event though two years after he had left the Board (thus raising again the issue of setting the record straight). Lawn acknowledges Selby-Bigge's view that the regulations were withdrawn in 1926 because of the development and stability of the system but he also quotes an intriguing sentence from the chapter on Regulation :

*The Board's regulations were subjected to a process of evaporation which dissipated their more liquid, volatile and aromatic components and left only a residue of financial solids.*

*(Selby-Bigge, op.cit., p168)*

Over the next pages, Selby-Bigge goes on to suggest that it may well be that

*...the harness of particular regulations can be lightened and the whip left in the coach house.*

The whip however he sees as a powerful weapon :

*A small kernel of specifically imperative provisions is left in the regulations, the operation of which is unmistakeable and independent of interpretation by the Board. But the main provisions only sum up under different heads what the authorities are expected to do, and refrain from saying, even by way of guidance, how they are to do it, or by reference to what particular considerations they will be criticised if they do not do it. On the other hand the payment of grant, which is presented as the dominant and exclusive concern of the regulations, is dependent on the absolute discretion of the Board unfettered by any previous declaration of the way in which it will be exercised - whatever the Board does, no appeal can be made .*

*... in the regulations for secondary schools and the "Code" for elementary schools, the omission of the large body of details or illustrations contained in previous regulations throws much more weight on general terms such as "recognition" or "approval", or "satisfaction", "efficiency", "sufficiency" and "suitability".*

*(Selby-Bigge, op cit, pp 172-3)*

Selby-Bigge goes on to congratulate the Board on "a bold and interesting experiment" which gives a "wider discretion to the Local Authorities and a more absolute because a more general discretion to the Central Authority". Success will depend on engendering "the spirit of partnership".

These statements are certainly helpful to Lawn's argument. However the post hoc theorizing of both witnesses does not allow for the fact that educational expenditure was only rarely a strategy to secure specific educational policy objectives but more often, as I argued earlier, an attempt to pursue broader political and economic priorities. Selby-Bigge admitted that the Board had problems in controlling the expenditure of local authorities. Moreover we must remember that he gives an absolutely key role to the Inspectorate in ensuring 'value for money' and 'efficiency'; in other words, in determining how the Board should exercise its 'discretion'. This seems somewhat over-optimistic : in 1927, there were 318 LEAs for elementary education, and 145 for secondary education - plus 868 boroughs and urban districts with limited powers of spending money (Selby-Bigge, p.175). Against this there were only 324 HMI in 1925 and even fewer, 307, five years later (Lawton and Gordon, 1987). One cannot help wondering whether the occupants of high office were deluding themselves as to what can be achieved with a coach-house whip.

This discussion of the significance of financial and regulatory control during the period raises questions about the potency of the remunerative base for the implementation of policy. What emerges is uncertain and the reason would appear to be that the Board, maybe the administrative system in general, was operating in a rapidly changing environment in which public spending on the social sector, including the education system, was beginning to show symptoms of the rapid growth that escalated post 1945. Although educational expenditure remained at a steady 6 to 7% of national expenditure (Simon, op cit, p375), there was an increase in the Board's estimates between 1920-21 and 1933-34 of around 250% (p.380). As public expenditure on the social sector experienced a sea-change, techniques for controlling it, and for relating monies spent to any form of specified policy, remained embryonic.

Co-ercive power over the curriculum may of course be less direct and explicit than that expressed through precise specification. For example, it has long been suggested that the English secondary school curriculum has been closely controlled, not by prescription of what was to be studied but rather by tight control over what the system was supposed to achieve ; in other words, by an elaborate public examination edifice in which both the syllabus and the assessment is largely the responsibility of bodies external to the schools. In a book significantly titled Examinations : an account of their evolution as administrative devices in England, Montgomery says :

*...like financial control, (examinations) can be a means of exerting power. Financial control is inescapable ... Once the financial framework is set up, however, examinations can prove more effective in determining the real nature of the education given in the classroom. Grant controls and central inspection have proved relatively clumsy methods, when compared with examinations, in forming details of the school curriculum. For many years, grants to schools from the central government have been made indirectly, through the local bodies ; there is little evidence to suggest that they affected the curricula other than in a general way since the eclipse of the Revised Codes and of the early Secondary School Regulations .... The visits of Her Majesty's Inspectors have long been sufficiently infrequent to be the cause of a considerable commotion within each school. External examinations, in contrast, are annual events to which school syllabuses are geared directly, and they affect the day-to-day teaching more intimately.*  
(Montgomery, 1965, p.168)

What then was the situation in the inter-war years ? In 1917 the Board had established the Secondary Schools Examination Council (SSEC) to undertake the co-ordination and oversight of the examination system at a time when the options available to schools from a plethora of examining bodies were becoming increasingly chaotic. The Council was originally made up of nine representatives from the

university examining boards, four from the local authorities' associations, six from the teacher organisations and three HMI. The Chairman was appointed by the Board of Education.

The new Council set about the task of creating a more or less uniform system. Montgomery suggests that at the same time "the examinations were gently used to promote central policy" (op.cit, p131). In fact the Board was able to influence various aspects of school practice via an inter-play between the Regulations and the examination system. For example, pupils were not allowed to enter for examinations before the age of sixteen ; entry fees were grant-aided only in relation to approved examinations; and only those secondary schools which had at least one 'form' entered for School Certificate were eligible for grant. Again, under the 1936 Education Act, the Board decreed that public examinations might not be taken by pupils in the new 'modern' schools. Through these years, however, the major impact of the examination system on the curriculum of secondary schools was in sustaining the notion of a 'sound general (i.e. academic) education' to 16, and an increasingly specialised one in the two following years. This was achieved by "grouping" subjects and requiring candidates to choose from each group.

If the School Certificate served as an indicator of the successful completion of a sound general education, then the Matriculation (which could be achieved by performance at an enhanced level) was intended as a predictor of future potential, most particularly for university education. Schools which anticipated sending even a few of their pupils on to higher education had to study carefully the requirements of each university. The particular demands of Oxford and Cambridge (for Latin), and of London, therefore came to dominate the curriculum of secondary schools to an excessive degree. However, as Montgomery says,

*Though there were variations in Matriculation requirements, there was little divergence in principle when it came to determining a balanced curriculum in the early twentieth century. The universities filled a position in determining the curriculum of their tributary schools which could only have been rivalled by an organisation of a national government. Central control was out of fashion when examinations came in.*

*(Montgomery, 1965, p.158)*

There are two ways of interpreting such a view in so far as it reflects upon the Board of Education as a policy making body. One is that the Board indeed lacked power in relation to the examinations which were to all intents and purposes in the grip of a virtually independent sub-system. Thus the Board appears to have lacked



any decisive power over the secondary curriculum. The other view is that there was "little divergence in principle" and that the Board was therefore content to let things take their course. It is true that, although the SSEC and the examination enterprise took on a life of its own, there was never a period in which the Board lost touch with its activities by virtue of its power to appoint a Chairman and the continuing presence of its Inspectors. Moreover, there was no ideological conflict between the Board and a secondary examinations system geared to the interests and views of the universities. The content of curriculum leading to examinations at 16 was not seen as a contentious issue : the necessary elements were re-inforced by a more or less universal 'common-sense' perception of what education was about. But one has to conclude by saying that, given the extent to which examinations operated a *de facto* control over school programmes, the Board did not appear anxious to take this potentially powerful coercive device directly into its own hands. Another coach-house whip, perhaps ; but this one had been lent to others.

Before leaving this period we must turn to the question of power conceived as knowledge and information, and to normative power seen as the possibility of bestowing symbolic rewards.

During these years education was clearly a matter of increasing public interest, a fact demonstrated by its rising profile in political life. But in many places its actual practice remained trapped in rigid and separated educational traditions :

*The narrow idealistic classicism of the grammar school and the narrow realistic utilitarianism of the elementary school were still strong....*  
(Curtis and Boulton, 1966, p241)

Nevertheless there was a current of new educational thinking which was beginning to penetrate these earlier certainties, encouraged by improvements in teacher training. Most educational writing of the time focused on the individual child and his development. This led naturally to a concern for the organisation of classrooms and the content of the curriculum. Dewey's writing was first published in England just after the 1914-18 war and his ideas about practical learning and the importance of relevance to the needs of a changing world impressed many English teachers. Ideas such as these, together with the influence of the "new psychologists" of the early twentieth century, encouraged the foundation of several conspicuous experimental schools such as Dartington Hall and Neill's Summerhill. But change was also visible in elementary schools and even some secondaries. Teachers in these were influenced by books such as Caldwell Cook's Play Way (1917) ; by Homer Lane's ideas about

the educative value of self-government by pupils ; and by Norman McMunn's attempts to develop individualised learning ("differentialism") alongside peer tutoring.

Knowledge of these ideas spread through the publication of books describing experimental practices, and even more widely through the Board of Education's Suggestions which was re-issued in 1926 and 1937. Perhaps the key book as far as the moulding of student teachers was concerned was Sir Percy Nunn's Education, its Data and First Principles, first published in 1920 but continuously in print over forty years. Nunn was a scientist and philosopher who became Director of the London Day Training College, one of those institutions which offered supplementary training to university students intending to become teachers. Academics in other fields were also writing about educational issues : among these, the contributions of two philosophers - A.N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell - were significant.

This very rapid review of educational thinking throws some light on the location of knowledge-based power in these years :

- most original and influential thinking was coming from practising teachers - Cook, Lane, McMunn, Neill, and many others ;
- those writers who were not teachers drew on diverse academic disciplines rather than expertise in formal educational studies *per se* : for example, philosophy, science, psychology. There were few "educationalists" as such ;
- none were associated with the policy-making process of the Ministry. Beyond contributing to the Suggestions, HMI's work was confined to inspection rather than the production of officially sponsored expertise;
- educational thinking seems to have been more concerned with teaching and learning rather than with broader issues of policy. (This is not to deny much parallel activity in the political sphere aimed at securing change and expansion.).

From this account I think we can argue that the Board of Education neither had nor claimed any privileged role in the production or ownership of knowledge and expertise about educational processes. There is also no evidence that their control of information was such as to add significantly to their power base. We should not however ignore the work of the Board's Consultative Committee which produced four significant reports during this period, three under the chairmanship of Hadow and one under Spens. Here we overlap with questions concerning the normative power of the department because appointment to this Committee was arguably the major mark of approval which the Board could bestow. Questions therefore arise about the nature of the expertise generated by the Committee, the characteristics of its

members and the possible reasons why they might have accepted the Board's invitation to participate.

Kogan and Packwood, who have written one of the few available studies, suggest that such committees

*enhance the process of social discovery and criticism by taking issues that are already prominent in the educational establishment, by collating the data which make or criticise the case for change, and by presenting governments with public statements upon which changes in policy can be based ....*

*At the same time as making .. deliberate attempts to evangelise by eulogy, the councils mounted arguments for changes in policy which were already being mooted within the education and wider social service world...*

*Apart, then, from the evangelical and the policy formation role, the committees have legitimised new thinking about the relationship between education and society...*

*None of these functions is, in principle, exclusive to government committees.*

*(Kogan and Packwood, 1974, pp4-6)*

They conclude this summary with the following

*.. government councils stand halfway between the formal authorities and informal systems that we have been describing. While they are the creatures of government, appointed by ministers, financed by the Treasury, recruited largely from those with whom government have formal relations, they also serve the important purpose of articulating beliefs, which might be inert and implicit in the whole society, about how education should be run and how it should be beneficially changed.*  
(pp6-7)

This final paragraph makes clear that such committees did not simply provide the messages which government wished to hear : but neither did they present the education world with wholly new ways of viewing their task. Instead they reflected back, they articulated, they sanctioned and they legitimised. In only a very narrow sense could they be seen as the 'property' of central government and indeed they often seemed to be setting the pace and the agenda for the years to come.

Kogan and Packwood examined the membership of the Hadow committee appointed in 1924 and pointed out that the report did not show the positions held by members and that no complete record remains in the Public Record Office (p90). However, by dint of searches in the Dictionary of National Biography and elsewhere, I have been able to discover significant elements in the professional experience of 33

out of the 46 people who served on the Consultative Committee at some time between 1924 and 1939. Among 45 items in the biographies of these 33 people, positions in higher education are much the largest category (Oxbridge 8, London 3, other universities 1). Three people held senior posts in training colleges, and 3 in technical education. There were 5 representatives from education committees and 2 Directors of Education. From the school sector, there were 2 heads of public schools and 3 of grammar schools ; there was only one identified elementary school head. Various teacher interests were represented through 3 people (one of whom was also head of Roedean). Adult education (4), army education (1), and the church (1) were all there, together with 2 ex-senior civil servants and 2 ex-HMIs. Only 9 of the 46 were women.

The Times Educational Supplement for 24 June 1920 seems to have recognised the names of some of the more humble members : of the 21 people appointed in 1920, it said

*The claims of children who now attend public elementary schools will be safe-guarded by many members of the committee, though in fact we do not feel that the local authorities will need much stimulation in this direction.*

Remarkably from our perspective, there does not appear to have been a representative of employers, of industrialists, of accountants, of parents or other pressure groups, of journalists or other media persons, of political advisers or of ideological pundits. There is, however, a clear indication of from what sections of the education system the Board sought advice, and also something about the relative importance it attached to the various sectors.

Kogan and Packwood comment on the motives which might have led individuals to accept an invitation to what could be a period of hard and unpaid work :

*Membership could have a threefold appeal - the fact of recognition, that one is regarded as having gained sufficient expertise and status to advise the government ; ambition, to make a little history, to help weave a new strand in educational policy. And for some, particularly teachers, such service enhances career prospects.*

*(op cit, p32)*

This does suggest that the Board did have a real share in the normative power available within the system. But our earlier account of significant contributions to educational thinking does indeed suggest that there were other sources of recognition from both professional and public opinion which could confer reputation and status,

and as the system expanded, there were other sources of position and promotion which could do the same.

### **2.2.2 Conclusion**

In this review of the years between 1918 and 1944, I have attempted to relate the narrative to the concepts within Bacharach and Lawler's model of the four bases of power. The account has demonstrated that it is useful to distinguish between them. It has been possible to show that government's grip on all four bases was tenuous, and with hindsight it seems that neither the Minister nor his officials seemed more than fleetingly aware of any need to exploit the possibilities open to them. A more historically acceptable interpretation however would be that they did not think it necessary or appropriate to tighten their grip on either local authorities or schools. Neither the pace nor the character of change was so contested an issue that it seemed essential to challenge existing patterns of control and influence. Coercive powers were limited or, in the case of examinations, not fully exploited ; remunerative power consisted of stop-go rhythms which related more to economic conditions than to educational policies ; the knowledge base was widely shared and the Board of Education was not attempting to lead opinion ; the information base was slight in the extreme ; and the normative base chiefly served to confirm rather than to challenge existing hierarchies. In general, however, there does not appear to have been any serious unease with the existing distribution of authority and influence within the education system.

## **2.3 From 1944 to 1974**

### **2.3.1 The context : two stories and two themes**

We turn now to the period 1944-74, again not to provide an exhaustive analysis but to examine the nature of the power exercised by the DES over the education system.

The choice of these specific dates may seem arbitrary and some justification may be useful. Many commentators have seen the middle sixties as a turning point in the evolution of maintained education on the grounds that it is at this juncture that the post-war reformist and expansionist consensus (for which the basis was well-established in the inter-war years), gave way to a period in which educational views

became increasingly polarised. Although political differences had long since featured in educational debate, from the return of the Labour government in 1964 educational differences entered the political debate with an increasing stridency. However, a review of the manner and style of the department's power relationships suggests considerable continuity across the whole thirty year period ; it is in the early seventies that the roots of a new regime can be found and it is therefore at that point that the divide will be made.

Most analyses of educational developments during the thirty years after the 1944 Education Act appear to concentrate on two stories and to thread their accounts with the discussion of two themes. The stories are consecutive : the first concerns consensus, the second with its collapse. The themes are concerned with partnership and with interest groups. Together all four will provide a background for the analysis which follows.

### *The post-war consensus*

This tale deals with the implementation of the 1944 Act, a task hugely greater in scale than was originally envisaged. It stresses not the differences between Conservative and Labour, but rather the convergence of views, at least among politicians, and the continuities in policy. Thus we are reminded that both Ellen Wilkinson and George Tomlinson are often accused (with the benefit of hindsight) of having been more than dilatory in the promotion of a non-selective secondary system. Ellen Wilkinson, for example, is criticised for failing to repudiate The Nation's Schools (a pamphlet issued by the Ministry in 1945 before her arrival), which clearly advocated to local authorities the installation of a tri-partite system of secondary schooling (Ministry of Education, 1945). Similarly, George Tomlinson appeared to adopt a wholly pragmatic approach, in no way seeking to promote government policy by circumscribing the autonomy of LEAs ; and moreover giving a hostage to fortune by stating, in 1947, that it was "no part of our policy to reduce in any way the status or standing of the grammar school". However the position adopted by these two ministers does not seem too far removed from that of the majority of their parliamentary colleagues : no more than half a dozen Labour MPs spoke up in the House of Commons for comprehensive schools in the whole period of the post-war Labour administration (Fenwick, 1976). A Fabian research pamphlet published in 1952 indicated that commitment to non-selective schooling (which by that date involved only 1% of the age group) was equally divided between Conservative and Labour authorities ; and went on to assert that

*There are opinions in the Labour party which do not wish to see the special heritage of our day grammar schools destroyed or reduced to meet the immediate needs of this epoch. A policy of comprehensive schools might widen the gap between 'secondary' and 'public'. An aristocracy of learning among the adolescents is not necessarily, they believe, incompatible with an egalitarian age.*

*(Thompson, 1952)*

In the view of the authors of Unpopular Education (CCCS, 1981), this line in post-war Labour thinking indicated a definition of equality which stressed 'equality of opportunity'. The CCCS authors contrast this interpretation with genuine egalitarianism, where equality is seen as an end rather than merely, or even partly, a means to something else. Their argument is that Labour governments have often invoked both principles but that their policies in the post-war years were invariably directed towards 'equality of opportunity'. The authors go on to demonstrate a neat fit between arguments for equality of opportunity and arguments about the need of the economy for an enhanced supply of educated persons, particularly in the fields of science and technology. As they say

*The combination was very important. The economic themes and, especially, the stress on the need for a generally better educated work-force, gave a thoroughly hard-headed and vulgar materialist justification for equalising policies.*

*(CCCS, op.cit.,p.97)*

It is on this ground of economic advantage that we can see most clearly the apparent reasons for the convergence of Labour and Conservative policy, particularly with regard to secondary re-organisation. However, it is often dangerous to discount the altruism of traditional 'one nation' Conservative thinking, with its Whig traditions of reform, paternalism and 'sound administration' ; much radical critique loses its force through the projection of a dangerously over-simplified two-dimensional model of selfish capitalism. Thus the thrust of education policy under the Conservatives from 1951 to 1964 was not marked by any great change from that of their predecessors. The style remained pragmatic, genuinely expansionist (especially after the departure of Florence Horsburgh), and "there was no dogmatic opposition to experimentation with comprehensive schools" (Fenwick, op.cit.,p103). Eccles, Conservative Minister from 1954-57 and from 1959-62, presided over a considerable expansion in educational spending in both absolute and relative terms, and managed to imbue educational policy with an air of optimism and achievement. His successor, Boyle, was concerned for equality of opportunity and was willing to question the wisdom of selective secondary education (Kogan, 1971).

Kogan calls Boyle "a reluctant Conservative" ; he calls Crosland, Minister in the new Labour government, a "cautious revolutionary" because although he made the first moves towards the ending of selection at 11+, he thought that comprehensive schools should end physical segregation while retaining streaming (CCCS, op cit, p73). The continuity between him and Boyle is thus clear but it is nevertheless to this moment around the mid-sixties that we can trace the break-up of consensus, and we thus move to the second of the 'stories' which characterise these post-war year decades.

### ***The consensus breaks down***

Kogan (1975) sees the change to a Labour government in 1964 as marking a significant transition :

*The expansion of (higher education) and the creation of the polytechnics, and the promotion of the comprehensive school and the first attempts to create educational priority areas, all demonstrate how the Labour government took up expansionist policies already prepared by their Conservative predecessors but also how in terms of policies relating to social distribution they broke the consensus of two decades. The continuities were those of education being an undisputed good. The new and discontinuous policies were based on contentious social and economic rather than received educational premises.*

*(Kogan, 1975, p37)*

The most significant element in this revised direction was clearly the issue of Circular 10/65 requesting LEAs to submit plans for ending selection at 11 (DES,1965). Much has been made of this action, largely directed at down-playing its importance, either by demonstrating that many LEAs were already moving in this direction or by stressing that Crosland chose to "request" rather than require compliance with his policy objectives. However, even a cursory study of the relevant figures shows that Circular 10/65 marked a turning point ; in 1964 7% of pupils were in comprehensive schools and by 1970 the figure was 30%. But Crosland made haste slowly. Many submitted plans were sent back for further thought and the Minister declared that he was not prepared to accept "any old makeshift scheme". Complete re-organisation was going to take time.

These moves left the Conservative opposition in something of a dilemma. Preparing for the 1964 election, they had declared themselves against "doctrinaire plans for comprehensives" but still committed to "opportunities to go forward". In the 1966 campaign they spoke of "arbitrary interference with the power of local authorities to put forward proposals which they believe to be right..." ; yet by August



1966, only 3 LEAs had failed to submit their plans, 15 had had their plans approved, 52 had received partial approval, and 68 were 'pending', having been received by the DES. By February 1970, after a swing back to the Conservatives in the local elections of 1967, Margaret Thatcher was developing her famous exercise in logical thinking by arguing for the "co-existence" of selective and non-selective schools ; while Boyle, though against compulsion, was advocating the end of selection. This is not, however, meant to suggest that the consensus was about to re-surface. From here on, events became more significant than words as each side began to push on the pendulum whenever and wherever the opportunity arose. In the final months of the Labour administration, Edward Short failed, as a result of inefficient whipping, to get legislation through Parliament aimed at converting Crosland's request into a statutory requirement. By June of the same year, Margaret Thatcher had replaced him as the incoming Conservative Minister ; within three days she had issued Circular 10/70 which 'withdrew' 10/65. But by 1974, Labour was once more "reversing the engines". Education was firmly established as a political football.

### ***Partnership***

Until very recently, partnership was perhaps the first concept encountered by students of educational administration to account for the relationships between central and local government and between both of these and the teachers. As Fenwick said

*(partnership) is not a purely objective term ; it undoubtedly carries an overtone of approval by its users and it may serve to disguise problems in consensus and to distort analysis with legal fiction.*  
(Fenwick, 1976, p.2)

Derek Birley, with years of experience as Deputy Education Officer in Liverpool behind him, was more scathing :

*The present system is a kind of compromise machine. People often explain it as a partnership, notably between the Department of Education and Science, the local authority and the teacher. It is a homely metaphor. We are invited to think of three chaps amicably chewing over problems together, a sort of family situation in which, though power is not equally distributed, everyone at least has a voice. In reality, interplay of these three abstractions is utterly unlike those of independent individuals. For instance, the DES is only part of a government; the LEA, one of several score anyway, embraces both council and education committee; the teacher is a member of a union and an employee of the LEA as well as one of a staff serving under a head, or a head trying to lead a staff. And of course, there are many other sophistications attached to the roles of each 'partner', not to mention many other partners (such as the voluntary bodies, the universities and even the poor old parents).*

(Birley, 1972, p.5)

In Lawton's (1980) account of the partnership model, there are some interesting reminders that whatever the 'truth' of the situation, the relationships within it are not static. Through the image of a triangle in which each side represents one of the three major 'partners', Lawton suggests that at any one time one side may be longer, ie more powerful, than the others (though not of course longer than the other two combined). He goes on to suggest that the metaphor of partnership, with its overtones of satisfaction and trust, has tended to give way in recent years to one of accountability which implies dissatisfaction and distrust. However, the image of partnership is remarkably resilient. Even throughout the eighties, a period of increasing confrontation between all concerned, DES publications continued to make pious references to the need to work out the implications of policy with "its partners" (see, for example, Better Schools, DES 1985a, passim). This discourse was developed and institutionalised during the three decades following on from the 1944 Act.

### ***Interest Groups***

It is a nice point to distinguish between partnership and the related idea of interest groups. As Birley pointed out, the partners are in no sense monolithic and the divisions within one element of the triad may sometimes seem almost as great as the differences between them. Kogan (1975) has used the term 'interest groups' to distinguish between these sub-divisions. Such groups he describes as "legitimised" in so far as they have

*an accepted right to be consulted by government and by local authorities, and by public organisations concerned with education such as universities, before policies are authorised (even though) the decision to consult is in the gift, formally, of the Secretary of State.*  
(Kogan, 1975, p75)

Other groups lie outside the normal processes of consultation and these are termed "non-legitimised". These groups come much closer to the standard definition of interest groups which are generally regarded as groups of people who are politically active in some cause close to their interests and on which they are often very knowledgeable. It is possible to regard the influence of such groups in two ways. On the one hand, their existence is seen within the dominant pluralist perspective as benign, providing government with more information about public opinion on key issues of policy than can be gleaned from elections, and giving scope for those with urgent concerns to find a legitimate and socially useful form of participation in the political process. An alternative view is to see interest group activity as an organised

attempt by minorities to exploit the governmental system for purely sectional purposes. One effect of their interventions is to induce politicians to 'get things moving' on issues which generate interest group campaigns and hence adverse media attention : the result is often a series of unco-ordinated short term policies (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987).

Birley is one who takes this second view. Writing of the attempt to develop more systematic planning processes in the DES in the late sixties and early seventies, an issue to which we will return, he says

*The much greater susceptibility of central government in the 1960s to influence from pressure groups represents a bigger threat to constructive planning than the reactions of the other partners in the governmental process, because these reactions can be expected and allowed for whereas the influence of pressure groups is essentially arbitrary. The accessibility of central government to pressures and the effectiveness of pressure groups is well illustrated by the effect of the mass media of communication, notably television. Instant news and instant comment, the instant presentation of highly dramatised issues - all this creates a climate in which anything but an instant response can be made to look like a silly evasion; hence the fashion for instant government.*

(Birley, 1972, p.7)

It is worth remembering that Birley was writing, not recently, but at the end of the period under review.

### **An over-view**

Kogan's (1975) use of interest group theory seems designed to take a neutral view of their existence. His book provides a painstaking account of the input of a whole range of groups : but although he certainly does not down-play the areas of conflict, he records rather than evaluates the facts of participation and pressure. Much educational policy analysis has used this approach. In the Introduction to his book, *Education as a Public Service*, in which he draws on ideas developed by Maclure in 1970, Shipman spells out his own perspective which can stand for many others who have written in this field, (with the notable exception of explicitly neo-Marxist studies such as CCCS, 1981) :

*The service can be seen as a grid, a net. That net, the education service, depends for its shape and organisation on pressure groups pulling away at the corners. On one axis of the grid are financial, legal and administrative controls exercised by central government, the Treasury, the DES, LEAs, churches and so on. On the other axis are professional, academic pressures exercised by the teachers, lecturers, researchers, examination boards and so on. Developments are the result of the interaction between these two sets of influences.*

*To each of the parties within the education service pulling at their corner, can be added external forces. Some of these will come from the Treasury, the Department of Employment, the Manpower Services Commission, the Department of Industry, the universities, independent schools, the European Economic Community, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and so on. But others come from parents, employers, trade unions, social workers, youth workers acting through interest groups both to affect the legal and financial basis of the service and to influence professional practice.*

*(Shipman, 1984, pp5-6)*

Shipman goes on to say that this is a pluralist model which assumes that power is dispersed; that while it can be "used to generate hunches, it should not be mistaken for reality on the ground with all its confusion and change"; and that while it may suggest rationality in decision making, this is far from the reality of what happens and that policy-makers are doomed "to live with the unintended consequences of their actions".

Perhaps the surprising statement here is that it might be assumed that this model of policy-making in the interstices of a net might even conceivably be a rational process. Indeed the wonder of the whole scenario is that anything purposive happens at all !

I have dealt at some length with these themes of partnership and interest groups because, as we turn to look more explicitly at the manner in which the DES did, or did not, attempt to engage in curriculum policy making, it is important to consider, not only what happened during this period (the story, or rather stories), but also the context in which events took place. In all this there has been only a brief reference to the wider national and international context : the period of post-war austerity and reconstruction; the booming, swinging years of the late fifties and early sixties; and the unsettling period from the late sixties when unwelcome characters such as French students, Arab oil-men, Cuban missile minders and striking miners seemed destined to shake the country out of its growing complacency. Yet all these factors impinged on educational policy. When we add to this the huge weight of the 'partnership' described above, we can more easily appreciate the extent to which the Ministry, and later the DES, was confined within what seemed to be an ever-diminishing space.

Having laid the ground in terms of narrative and themes, the position with regard to the four identified bases of power may now be more readily assessed : that task will occupy the remainder of this chapter.

### 2.3.2 The Powers of Central Government

#### *The Coercive Base*

The scope for coercive action in relation to curriculum policy during these years was clearly limited. As Fenwick points out, the 1944 Act was drawn up in such a way as effectively to weaken the position of the Ministry vis-a-vis the local authorities (Fenwick, 1976, p37). For some thirty years, a somewhat weak definition of the "duty" of the Minister as set out in the Act was to prevail :

*... to promote the education of the people of England and Wales and the progressive development of the institutions devoted to that purpose, and to secure the effective execution by local authorities, under his control and direction, of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive educational service in every area.*

*(para 1.1)*

It was for local authorities, governing bodies, and the heads of institutions in co-operation with their staff, to determine the detailed content of educational programmes. The Act, therefore, saw the end of the Ministry's direct, but already loose, control over the secondary curriculum, thus bringing it into line with the elementary/primary, curriculum. Still in place was the SSEC and beneath it the examining boards. But this essentially co-ercive restraint on curriculum structures was soon to be relaxed : first, when the SSEC recommended and the Minister accepted that a single subject examination be introduced in 1951 to replace the School Certificate ; and later when the council itself was dissolved in 1964 and its responsibilities handed over to the newly established Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations. Control via examinations, which had certainly been potent during the inter-war years even though exercised on the Board's behalf by a delegated body, receded even further with the introduction in the mid-sixties of the Certificate of Secondary Education, a 16+ examination originally intended for pupils in the 20th to the 60th percentile of the ability range, which from its earliest conception had been developed and controlled by teachers. Furthermore, the Schools Council proceeded to exercise its major influence over the examination system through detailed work on the techniques of examining rather than on strategic planning. It was only later that it ventured into the business of proposing radical alterations in the structure of public examinations (in relation to 18+ during the sixties, and 16+ in the early seventies) and it made little enough headway (Plaskow, 1985).

The Council itself was the visible sign that curriculum control, together with the accepted right to leadership in curriculum matters, had passed firmly into the hands of the profession. It had been set up as a result of the protests of teachers and local authorities to the attempt by David Eccles in 1962 to set up a Curriculum Study Group within the Ministry, a move which Crosland was later to refer to as a "sadly misunderstood attempt to help the schools" (Kogan, 1971, p170). The protests, and the establishment of the Council, can be seen as confirmation of a de facto situation in which the Ministry appeared bereft of any direct control over the curriculum. During the remainder of this period all the key committees of the Council were dominated by representatives of the teacher associations. The notion that curriculum expertise lay with the practitioner was rarely contested. This was as true for the primary as for the secondary sector. The Plowden report on Primary Education published in 1967, while in many ways ahead of practice in terms of its advocacy of child-centred education, nevertheless re-inforced this dominant view of the proper location for curriculum development (CAC, 1967). Its major recommendation to government concerned the establishment of Educational Priority Areas : in other words, it took government's role to be the judicious provision of resources. Further evidence can be gleaned from the list of projects commissioned by the Schools Council. Here we see reflected in the names of project directors and their teams, the greatly enlarged world of teacher training and educational research, itself the product of a rapid growth in teacher numbers and of their substantially enlarged participation in advanced courses.

As more and more expertise and experience developed in the broad pastures of the education sub-system, it is not surprising that the attitude of Ministers towards the curriculum became increasingly diffident. David Eccles had made his famous remark about the need for others to enter the 'secret garden of the curriculum' in 1960 ; but as the sixties progressed, the experience of many teachers in the classroom was that there were new and urgent problems to be solved and that such problems had to be resolved on the ground, for no-one else had the answers. Crosland himself was quite clear about his role in relation to the curriculum. In his interview with Kogan, he said

*The nearer one comes to the professional content of education, the more indirect the Minister's influence is. And I'm sure this is right..... generally I didn't regard either myself or my officials as in the slightest degree competent to interfere with the curriculum. We're educational politicians and administrators, not professional educationalists.*

*(Kogan, 1971, pp 172-3)*

But if the Minister himself could make remarks of this kind, why did Kogan insist that "If the role of the centre has always been strong, it has become stronger" (Kogan

1971) and, five years later, that the DES had "determinant authority and great power"? And this despite his comment on the last page of his 1975 study, where he describes the education system as "pluralistic, incremental, unsystematic, re-active". As he himself says,

*In this book we have taken a fragment of social concern and are yet still uncertain as to how so vast and complex a structure interacts, creates new policies, and somehow moves forward.*

*(Kogan, 1975, p 238)*

The process, he claims, is instrumental rather than systematic. The DES "denies it has power to aggregate or to lead yet it plainly does so". Do we then have picture of a department which could not avoid policy formulation but which did so without a sense of direction and without realising the implications of its actions, subject to the winds of interest and pressure and the steady breeze of administrative necessities? Is this the "determinant authority and great power" ?

It is possible that Kogan, despite his privileged knowledge as a former civil servant in the DES, had a somewhat biased view of the department's authority in so far as he knew the weight of administrative activity which perennially passes through a government office. In classroom parlance, much of this might be called 'busy-work', activity without any purpose, at least in terms of policy generation. But seen from a local education office, this activity could be differently interpreted. Birley (1972) expressed an alternative view of DES activity at this time :

*The central government has removed over the years more and more power from the local authorities. Yet, on examination, it seems scarcely to have put this power to positive use, but has rather increased its negative control..... The government of the day declared its intention in 1965 to introduce comprehensive education.... But this intention was, and could only be, implemented by negative methods - refusal to allow LEAs to build secondary schools that did not conform to that aim. That, and exhortations, was as much as the government could achieve.....*

*(Birley, 1972, p 6)*

It is clear that administrative regulation - positive or negative - occupied much of the department's time during these years. A huge proportion of this work concerned the opening, closing or re-organisation of schools which followed on from the post-1944 restructuring, then the moves to end selection, and then the raising of the school leaving age. Such decisions were needed also in relation to the pre- and post-school sectors, technical education, higher education in both sectors, the youth service, the health and welfare services, and even (under Mrs Thatcher) the minutiae of school

milk provision. The regulation of the teaching profession formed a further large province for departmental activity.

One can of course argue that not one of these regulatory decisions, and certainly not one of the macro-organisational questions concerning comprehensivisation or the raising of the school leaving age, failed to have some kind of impact on the curriculum. However, what seems clear is that there was no coherent and consistent policy informing all these moves. While clearly the weight of central government's administrative activities impinged on local authorities and their schools, their curriculum implications were for the profession to work out. Boyle, in fact, saw policy in its broadest sense as emerging from this professional process :

*I would say overwhelmingly the biggest number (of policies) originated from what one broadly calls the 'education world'.... from the logic of the education service as it was developing.*

*(Kogan, 1971, p 89)*

### ***The Remunerative Base***

What of the remunerative base during these years ? Is it possible to argue that between 1944 and the early 1970s, the DES was using financial measures to enforce policy, particularly in matters with a direct bearing upon the curriculum ?

To answer these questions it is first necessary to look at some wider issues related to educational funding. The major change during this period was the switch to general or 'block' grant as a result of the Local Government Act of 1958. Prior to this, methods of funding LEAs remained very close to the system of percentage grant first introduced by Fisher in 1918. The crucial question for LEAs was whether planned expenditure would be 'recognised for grant' by the Ministry. Payment of grant was subject to local authority compliance with Ministry 'standards' and regulations; if it was not satisfied, the Ministry might make arbitrary deductions from the sum which could otherwise have been paid. Sir William Pile, a civil servant in the DES for 26 years and Permanent Secretary from 1970 to 1976, claims that this system enabled "fairly detailed control over the expenditure of local authorities" (Pile, 1979 : a source which we must once again recognise contains a good deal of *post hoc* rationalisation but, in the very matters to which it attends, provides useful evidence about DES sensitivities and concerns). Although one of the avowed purposes of the switch to general grant was to increase local financial discretion, there still lingered the notion that percentage grants were open-ended and hence potentially inflationary. Moreover, because they were at least partly unpredictable, they were regarded as



difficult to integrate into any serious planning exercise. Perhaps, therefore, it is not surprising that it was after the introduction of the block grant that education began to secure a rocketing proportion of public sector expenditure : prior to 1958, the percentage of national income devoted to education was around 4%; by the middle 1970s, that figure had virtually doubled.

The general grant system of 1958 took the form of an aggregated sum to support local authority expenditure on all public services, with no part ear-marked for particular uses. What had previously been a specific grant to the local education authority now became an element in the general grant to the local authority. The local authority then had the responsibility of deciding whether the global sum should be divided up in such a way as to reflect the government's original calculations. A further relaxation resulted from the fact that although the Ministry still issued regulations setting out the required standards for building, staffing, etc, the local authorities no longer had to ensure that all their expenditure was 'allowable'.

Problems, however, continued to arise because of the inflexibility of the rating system. The Local Government Act of 1966 therefore revised the arrangements and henceforward supported local authority expenditure via a more sophisticated version of the block grant, the Rate Support Grant (RSG). Yet more revisions were made in 1974. The intention was to increase steadily the level of the Exchequer's contribution to local authority services. This, indeed, happened. Over a decade, the percentage of 'relevant' expenditure on local services which was paid by central government rose from 54% (1967-68) to 66% (1975-76) (Pile, 1979). But although one might argue that general grant and its successor, the RSG, gave a new degree of freedom to local authorities, it remained true that central government was becoming increasingly indispensable in the funding of local services and so, by the same token, the authorities themselves were becoming increasingly vulnerable to changes in policy concerning the level of public expenditure.

Griffith (1966) argued that the autonomy apparently allowed by the block grant was illusory, especially in relation to education where freedom of action was effectively curbed by a huge range of controls and regulations which, while not specifically financial, circumscribed every local decision. Eileen Byrne's (1974) study of resource allocation in Lincoln, Nottingham and Northumberland reached similar conclusions that LEA discretion was narrow and getting more so. Government frequently handed down conflicting and therefore constraining demands;

for example, Circular 10/65 called for the re-organisation of secondary schools but within the existing estimates. She concluded that

*The balance of power appears .. to have shifted constantly from local to central government over the past 25 years, to the detriment of the LEAs' capacity to respond to .. local needs and demand.*

*(Byrne, 1974, p307)*

Birley is one who felt that, even within local government, the education committee was losing its autonomy to the corporate planning structures within the local authority, notably to the Finance and General Purposes committee (as it is generally called), a financial over-lord which receives the bids of each of its sub-ordinate committees and then allocates resources between them, not necessarily according to the assumptions built into the calculation of the RSG.

*In purely financial terms some have claimed that education has received the same share of what was available as it would have done under the old system. However, our concern is not simply with money but with the terms on which it is offered. In many places, for instance, more decisions affecting the education service were arbitrary because more were taken on the basis of standardisation throughout all local services.... The potential for constructive planning by LEAs in partnership with the education ministry envisaged by the 1944 Act is diminished when the direct line between the two is weakened and when both locally and centrally, educational leadership is circumscribed.*

*(Birley, 1972, p 9)*

But despite all the many constraints on LEAs, we have to recognise the force of Kogan's observation (1971, p 27) that, although the "range and level" of local authorities' activities were prescribed by central government, this was not true of the "style and quality". And at a time when central government was not concerned to influence or direct the content of the curriculum, curriculum belonged to the sphere of local "style and quality". Regan (1979) listed the various areas of discretion open to local authorities. Very largely this consisted in determining (within DES regulations as to permitted maxima) the number, types and grades of teachers to be appointed; the level of resources such as books and equipment which would be provided in institutions of various types; and the pattern of in-service training and advisory services. Moreover, authorities were also free to determine the extent to which they undertook capital expenditure within the permitted maximum figure. Eileen Byrne illustrates this wide area of discretion in a chapter called The Allocation of Curricular Resources:

*... the discriminial patterns of allocating resources in the three survey areas... appeared to be based on widespread assumptions bearing little traceable relationship to assessed educational needs according to 'age, ability and aptitude or to future social and industrial needs. What assumptions ? For example, only the top 12 per cent, 15 per cent or 25 per cent of the ability range respectively in the survey areas could cope with external examinations - until the late 1950s and mid-1960s proved the authorities wrong. But by then scores of schools had been designed and staffed for non-examination syllabuses without extended (ie five year) courses. Small schools are better than large schools for the less able whatever the educational product at 15+; but grammar school children need large, economic and viable schools offering a wider variety of subjects. The education of boys ought to be different from the education of girls. Secondary modern pupils don't want to stay on for a Vth year. Rural children and those in small schools don't need the full range of specialist subjects or resources. Less able pupils need less money, fewer staff, lower-paid staff than the academically bright. Children in new schools need more money than those in old schools. Children in non-grammar schools don't need or can't profit from Nuffield science projects, Project Technology, and audio-visual language courses. They shouldn't even learn modern languages. Girls don't want to do physics; boys don't want to do biology or to cook. Clever pupils don't like or need technical crafts. And above all, teachers in post-war schools, especially non-grammar schools, can offer a full education in schools over-crowded by 10 per cent, 15 per cent, or even 20 per cent.*

*(Byrne, 1974, pp 26-27)*

Byrne then goes on to describe differential resource allocation in the three authorities that she studied with sections on discriminial education by ability, by sex, by the provision or not of extended courses based on their "viability" in schools of particular sizes, and by access to public examinations. Here then we see curriculum policy making taking place at the local level in the terms described by Kirst and Walker and quoted in Chapter 1. Children in the schools studied by Byrne were most certainly "required to study certain subjects, and forbidden to study others, ... provided with the opportunities to study some phenomena but not provided with the means of studying others..." ; such implicit or explicit guides must properly be seen as curriculum policy and the process of determining them, curriculum policy-making. The impact of LEA assumptions, and the funding of the service which resulted from those assumptions, directly affected generations of children. But central government, though providing well over half the money, did not exploit its potential control over these resources either to intervene or to standardise.

So much for control based on resources in terms of the year by year dealings of the DES with the local authorities. There is, however, another story to tell about significant developments within the department, and within government as a whole, concerning the overall management of resources. The full impact of these

developments was not to be felt by local authorities until the next decade ; but through the sixties and early seventies a capacity for detailed management based upon the marriage of planning to refined budgetary techniques was growing rapidly.

An early venture into centralised planning is to be found in the Architects and Building Branch, established in the early fifties . This was jointly chaired by the Chief Architect of Hertfordshire, Stirrat Johnson-Marshall, and a succession of senior DES officials including both Derek Morrell and William Pile. Kogan (1971) sees the establishment of the branch as "decisively altering the balance of power between central and local government".

A further move in the direction of central planning was the establishment of the Teacher Supply Branch in 1962, a period of acute teacher shortage. But the major innovations of the period concerned expenditure. In 1961, government instituted a system of public expenditure surveys. This required departments to produce five-year projections of capital and current expenditure and the collated PESC (Public Expenditure Survey Committee) report allowed Ministers to take an overview of government spending plans. This exercise involved the DES in making medium-term projections. However, by itself the PESC process proved to be better at fore-casting the continuation of existing policies rather than at anticipating new ones. Furthermore, as Pile says,

*Nor were departments required to define their objectives in relation to the government's overall strategy, or to indicate how far either their present or their prospective policies forwarded the achievement of these objectives. Further, no useful way was provided for measuring the claims on resources of one programme against those of another.*  
(Pile, 1979, p 53)

As a result of these deficiencies the Treasury decided to introduce Planning Programme Budgeting (PPB), a technique developed during war-time operational research and popular for some time in public administration in the USA. Pile describes this process as

*a methodical analysis of objectives in a particular area of policy; an accurate measuring of both the inputs of resources provided to achieve these objectives and the outputs obtained; and the cost and other relevant information arranged in a way that makes possible the presentation of costed options, with supporting information about the implications of each course.*

(Pile, 1979, p 54)

The DES piloted this technique in 1967 and the first product was its Education Planning Paper no 1, Output Budgeting for the Department of Education and Science (DES, 1970). It is worth reviewing how the Permanent Secretary saw the problems and advantages of the PPB strategy. The first problem he saw related to the de-centralised nature of the education service which was clearly antipathetic to centralised planning. Second, he was concerned about the inbuilt inertia of a system in which freedom of manoeuvre was inevitably constrained by earlier decisions. Third, he saw difficulties in defining objectives in clear-cut terms, partly because many activities/inputs contributed to more than one objective, and partly because there were a multitude of views about the aims of education, and hence about priorities. And last, he considered that assessing outputs in quantitative terms was difficult either in terms of the satisfaction of individual demands on the system, or in terms of the social benefit of, for example, primary education or non-vocational secondary and post-school education. However, on the positive side he noted the value of re-ordering the department's information systems so as to relate costs to objectives; also the incentive to sort out medium-term objectives as "yard-sticks of educational advance", such as the number of school places built, teacher-pupil ratios, and participation rates post 16. Yard-sticks of individual attainment such as examination results were also systematized and periodic surveys encouraged in matters such as the measurement of, for example, reading ability. However, his overall conclusion was that

*Many would argue that the ultimate value of the PPB approach lies less in the development of specific techniques of measurement than in its encouragement of a rational, systematic and analytic approach to resource problems, and in the provision of a common framework for their discussion.*

*(Pile, 1979, p56)*

Two other developments require a brief note. One was the impact of Programme Analysis Review (PAR), a system of regular reviews of departmental policies instituted under the terms laid out in the White Paper of 1970, The Re-organisation of Central Government (Prime Minister, 1970). This exercise required the definition of policy objectives, the formulation of programmes in output terms, and the presentation of alternative strategies for the achievement of the chosen objectives. The second development which must be noted, even in this cursory form, is the establishment by the DES Finance Branch of its Education Programme Budget which, inter alia, aims to show "the extent to which educational expenditure is susceptible to policy choice". This is yet another activity which both grows out of and spawns improvements not only in the capacity to link resources to policy, but also in the information base of the department.

The first fruits of these developments in terms of policy development may be seen in the White Paper, Education : a Framework for Expansion published in 1972, two years after the return of a Conservative government and the arrival of Margaret Thatcher as Secretary of State for Education (DES, 1972a). Pile describes the White Paper as the product of "a major development of the department's capacity, through a combination of organisational changes and new methods of handling relevant statistical and financial data". The paper itself has several characteristics which we should note. In the first place, it was selective in that it focussed on areas of concern to the new government such as nursery education and teacher training; second, every section of the document was comprehensively supported by statistical data and expenditure projections in a way which indicates the substantial information base behind it; third, it represented "a deliberate attempt to tilt the balance in the disposition of resources between different sectors" (Pile, p 59); and finally, it aspired to be a ten-year strategy, which some may see as a bureaucratic pipe-dream.

As already suggested, the significance for policy-making of these various developments in planning technique was not fully apparent until the years after 1974. But nevertheless, their origins lie in this earlier period and it is therefore here that we should first encounter them. We see the DES acquiring substantially more sophisticated techniques for the control of policy through the management of resources, and simultaneously developing a far more comprehensive capacity to gather and to use information. Pile's account of the spectacular advances made in these directions must perhaps be treated with a little scepticism in the light of the rigorous criticism of DES planning in both the OECD (1975) Report and the subsequent report of the Expenditure Committee on Policy Making in the DES (House of Commons, 1976), neither of which are given even a passing reference in his book. However, even if the planning function was not yet operating in a wholly admirable manner, the future implications are clear.

### ***The Knowledge/Information Base***

If HMI are the "eyes and ears of the department", then we might expect to find that they were making a major contribution to the department's control over the knowledge/information base. In fact, these decades were clearly not among the most illustrious in the history of the Inspectorate. Lip-service is duly paid to their role as "guardians of national standards" (whatever that may mean), as channels of information between the DES and the LEAs, and as advisers to the teachers. But Boyle (in Kogan, 1971) suggested that he had not found that they made much of a

contribution to policy formulation nor that they were invariably consulted on important matters. Crosland acknowledged their advice concerning the various options for a non-selective pattern of schools which were included in Circular 10/65, and he described them as having an influence on curriculum through their participation in the Schools Council : hardly a warm endorsement ! Lawton and Gordon (1987) consider that during the period of broad consensus "it was natural for HMI to keep a fairly low profile", concentrating on promoting 'progressive' teaching and working for the stability of the tri-partite system. But Benn and Simon (1970) noted that throughout the years in which LEAs were, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, preparing their plans for non-selective secondary schools, HMI gave no specific advice or support ; rather they appeared to work on the assumption that the pattern of provision was a matter for local decision, thus apparently suggesting that the educational consequences of such decisions were neutral. HMI were thus the dogs which didn't bark in the night, and their non-interventionist approach nicely illustrates their re-active, rather than pro-active role during this period. By the mid-seventies their ambivalent attitude to non-differentiated schooling still held up : see, for example, their comments on mixed-ability teaching (DES, 1978).

Her Majesty's Inspectorate also had structural problems at this time. There was a growing over-lap with the rapidly developing advisory services in many LEAs; and there was also doubt as to their influence within the department. In 1968, a Select Committee investigated their role and was critical both of them, and of the department's use of their expertise (House of Commons, 1968). Among its recommendations, the Committee proposed an end to full inspections. However, in the early seventies, the role of HMI was rescued from decline by various factors : the appointment of William Pile as Permanent Secretary; the appointment of H.W.French in 1972 and then of Sheila Browne in 1974 as Senior Chief Inspector, now with deputy rather than under-secretary rank; and above all the development of the new review and planning procedures outlined above, which put a high premium on information and upon an understanding of alternative policy options, both areas to which HMI could presumably contribute. Thus, although between 1944 and 1974, HMI had done little to enhance the department's power through augmenting its command of the knowledge/information base, by the end of the period there were clear signs of movement in that direction.

At this point we should return to the officially sponsored 'knowledge' which emerged in the various reports of the Central Advisory Council and other ad hoc bodies during this period, among them such major land-marks as the Newsom and the

Plowden Reports (CAC, 1963 and 1967). As in the earlier period we will need later to consider membership of these committees as a form of patronage. But the point to make here is that the important research contained in the reports, and the resulting recommendations, were seen as the product of professional thinking and not as the generation of fresh knowledge by and for the department. Indeed the recommendations in the reports were invariably seen as a direct challenge to government. Thus they did not directly re-inforce government's grip on the knowledge base. They do however lead us on to consider where else power of this kind could be found in these years.

A remarkable feature of these three decades is the emergence of an intellectual 'establishment' in the sphere of education (Kogan and Packwood, 1974, p4). Both Ministers and bureaucrats appeared to welcome and benefit from this development. The most explicit acknowledgement of this came in Crosland's description to Kogan of his debt to an informal think-tank which met at his home during his years as Minister. This group included economists such as John Vaizey, sociologists such as A.H.Halsey, Michael Young and David Donnison, and other academics such as Noel Annan and Asa Briggs. University based research and commentary from people such as Mark Blaug, Jean Floud, Richard Peters, Paul Hirst, Basil Bernstein and J.W.B.Douglas, resulted in a shift of educational thinking to places outside the department. Such research was confirmed and extended in a formal sense by the establishment of the Schools Council in 1964 and of the Social Science Research Council, with its education sub-committee, in 1967; and also by the growing involvement of private foundations such as Nuffield from the late fifties onwards. The activities of these people, not least the influence of their work on advanced courses for teachers, together with the remarkable growth in the publication of books about education, were responsible for the steady development of expertise and informed opinion within the system as a whole.

Working sometimes alongside, sometimes in parallel, with the Schools' Council, there were the subject associations. Many of these were able to act as foci for the expertise of practising teachers. Though most had been formed much earlier in the century, they came into particular prominence during the curriculum development movement of the sixties and seventies. Their own work in the field, and their reaction to the work of others, was seen as authoritative and influential. Among the most prominent, we should note the Association for Science Education, the National Association for the Teaching of English, the Modern Languages Association and the Geographical Association, but the list is necessarily incomplete. Against the collective



wisdom of these bodies, the DES appeared to have little to offer, and the capacity and right of the subject associations to make authoritative statements about the curriculum were rarely challenged.

Other power bases existed, notably in the teacher associations, in which the pre-eminent figure during this period was Sir Ronald Gould, General Secretary of the largest union, the National Union of Teachers; and also in the local authority associations. Of these, the influence of the Association of Education Committees, which represented the education committee of every local authority except the ILEA until it was superseded in 1974, was enormous. This powerful position was partly attributable to its location within the system which gave it an obvious right to be consulted, but it was considerably enhanced by the personal status and influence of Sir William Alexander, its Secretary from 1946 to 1974. Sir William had weekly access to the Minister (see Boyle's evidence in Kogan 1971); daily contact, formal and informal, with senior DES officials; access to members of Parliament, often directly by involving them in the AEC's committees; and direct contacts with every conceivable interest and pressure group concerned with education. All this activity was backed by a powerful committee structure and secretariat. The work and the direct influence of this body and of its chief executive merits a detailed analysis on its own (Kogan 1975, chapter 6, is the fullest account available), but the relevant point for this discussion is that the strength and importance of its work, coupled with the parallel activities of the teacher associations, and the exponential growth of research and advanced educational study, all serve to under-line the fact that the department certainly had no monopoly of knowledge and expertise. Indeed, even in terms of information, pure and simple, it was only in the later years of this period that it could rival the grasp of, say, the AEC.

By the mid-seventies some, if not all, local authorities had themselves become involved in educational research and curriculum development, significant at the local and sometimes at the national level. Notable among these was the Inner London Education Authority which put enormous resources into both areas but there were many other examples throughout the country.

Finally, it is appropriate to mention the growing influence of the media - press and television - in fostering and legitimising the role of public opinion in determining what should and should not happen to the education system. (In 1974, Kogan and Packwood (op cit p4) estimated that there were 50 full-time educational journalists.) While it is arguable in what sense such expressions of opinion should count as



'knowledge', it was certainly the case that there were a growing number of people who claimed to know what was needed in schools. Where such opinion was co-ordinated through the work of pressure groups, we see the emergence of competing centres of expertise, often promoting views which were, it must be admitted, influenced by members who were also teachers. Examples of such groups would include the Campaign for the Advancement of State Education (CASE) and the National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM).

The conclusion to this section must be that, in 1974, the DES had no claim to be a centre of expertise or knowledge generation, and it had little or no influence on those locations within which such knowledge and expertise was being generated. However, if it was in a weak position in this respect, in the other aspect of this power 'base', the generation and ownership of information, the department was gaining ground. For as we noted in the previous section, by the mid-seventies new planning practices connected with resource allocation were requiring ever more extensive systems of information gathering.

### *The Normative Base*

The possession of normative power has been defined as the power to allocate symbolic rewards in the form of public recognition and other marks of approval which are prized by the recipient. Clearly, during these years the DES did have favours to bestow and could develop its authority through its willingness to recognise the contribution of some individuals and organisations, while giving only a low profile to others.

A major expression of such patronage was the power to appoint to a committee of the Central Advisory Council of Education, the body established in the 1944 Act to replace the pre-war Consultative Committees. The major reports published in these years were those from committees chaired by Crowther (15-18, CAC 1959/60), Newsom (Half our Future, on young school leavers, CAC 1963), and Plowden (Children and their Primary Schools, CAC 1967). There were also three other substantial reports from committees set up "at the whim of a minister" (Corbett, 1973, 3rd edition): Robbins (Higher Education, Committee on Higher Education, 1963), James (Teacher Education and Training, DES 1972), and Russell (Adult Education, DES 1973).

On one level therefore we must acknowledge that the right to appoint to these committees was a significant form of patronage. Yet looking through the membership, it appears that the department did not use this opportunity to indicate who should belong to its preferred educational establishment but rather appeared to confirm through its choices the existing hierarchies of prestige and reputation. The impression given is that the department wanted to draw in people whose expertise was already accredited by the 'professionals'. Moreover, the general thrust of the reports once published appeared to challenge rather than promote government policy and thus create distance between committee members and their sponsors. Thus, an invitation to serve both confirmed and enhanced the position of members, and there was no attempt to signal support for some viewpoints and policies rather than others simply through the selection of some people rather than others.

The relative obscurity of HMI during these years was discussed in the previous section of this chapter. The department seemed uninterested in establishing HMI as its 'organic intellectuals', and HMI rarely published or committed themselves to a public view of good practice. They were therefore not the beneficiaries of any normative power which might have been claimed by the department.

On the other side of the coin, as the educational world expanded, as education became a more and more dispersed field of interest and activity, and as public interest and concern for education grew, alternative sources of symbolic rewards became increasingly available. Reputations and prestigious appointments could be secured by climbing other ladders and ploughing other furrows. The universities, the media, the Schools Council, certain innovative LEAs, and various international organisations such as the OECD were all important platforms for the ambitious as well as potent sources of recognition. For many prominent figures in education during those years, there were thus many alternative patrons to government. The link between symbolic rewards and the whole business of knowledge production, demonstrated expertise and public recognition is obvious. During the thirty years to 1974, government often appeared to be slightly irrelevant to the business in hand.

### 2.3.3 Conclusion

This discussion of the years between 1944 and 1974 has done little enough to resolve the issue of power relationships between central and local government. Much more remains to be said and to every argument advanced in the previous pages, a counter-argument could be mounted, perhaps because of the inherently political nature of the issue. As Crosland says

*All governments and Ministers are a bit schizophrenic about their relationship with local authorities. On the one hand they genuinely believe the ringing phrases they use about how local government should have more power and freedom.... On the other hand a Labour government hates it when Tory councils pursue education or housing policies of which it disapproves, and exactly the same is true of a Tory government with Labour councils.*

*(Kogan, 1971, p 171)*

However, what I have attempted to do is to clarify some of the issues about control over the curriculum by examining in turn the various bases of power by means of which central government might or might not have exercised control. Co-ercive power, in the sense of legislation concerning the curriculum, was non-existent in this period. Firm regulation via control of the examination system was virtually abandoned as a means of securing conformity to some national norm. Certainly the DES was engaged in constant administrative, largely regulatory, activity; but this must not be confused with specific curriculum policy despite the almost inevitable knock-on effect of decisions about the standards and procedures to be observed by LEAs in their provision of a school system. To a very large degree, curriculum leadership lay in the schools and with the teaching profession's own intelligentsia in the colleges, universities, project teams and professional advisory services, although it has to be remembered that all these people were obliged to operate within the context of LEA assumptions, so graphically described by Eileen Byrne.

The power to control resources (the remunerative base) is a less clear cut issue because, as we saw, despite the apparent financial autonomy of the local authorities particularly after 1958, the DES could and did hedge LEA decision making with myriad regulations. However, in the absence of an explicit curriculum policy emanating from the DES, much that happened in schools was shaped by resource allocation within the authority. This was particularly true in the period to 1965 when there was a broad expansionist consensus but a parallel lack of concern with what should be taught. However, it was noted that financial and other novel forms of planning technique were being developed within the DES, and that these had a

potential for far greater control in the future. Such developments required a detailed knowledge of the workings of the system, its inputs and outputs, and increasingly, the degree of match between programme objectives and programme outcomes. In thus gathering to itself the capacity to manage the system in these new ways, the DES enormously enhanced its control of the knowledge/information base and, coincidentally, found a new role for HMI, a body which had had little sense of direction for some time. To know a system and what is more, to set the agenda for knowledge gathering, is to enhance the capacity to control it. However, if the potential was developed during the years before 1974, its effective deployment was still to come.

Simultaneously during these years, access to the knowledge base was substantially widened. Whereas in the inter-war years, expertise in educational matters was relatively confined, - and its public expression almost wholly confined - to prominent Establishment figures, the post-war period saw a growing acknowledgement of education as a legitimate and important area for public debate and academic critique. Concern for the quality of social life within the developing Welfare State encouraged the formation of countless interest and pressure groups, generally seen to be a healthy manifestation of pluralism and an important contribution to the emergence of consensus. Colleges and university departments of education no longer confined themselves to the training of neo-phyte teachers, but launched into public debate and the promotion of enhanced professionalism among practising teachers. Sociologists, curriculum theorists, and philosophers joined the ranks of the somewhat discredited psychologists and made a bid for a share of that form of power which accrues to the expert and the public debater. The media gave them increasing encouragement by devoting more and more space to educational issues and *causes celebres*. Not only was a monopoly of the knowledge/information base thereby denied to the DES, but central government itself acknowledged the situation by bestowing symbolic rewards on the system's own leaders. Thus other forms of recognition and approval were increasingly available and the DES had no exclusive grip on the normative base of power either.

During these years it was common to explain the functioning of the social and indeed, the educational, system in terms of pluralism. While such theories are no longer popular among students of policy, it is easy to see why they seemed adequate and appropriate at the time. The years between 1944 and 1974 were, it has been claimed, marked first by consensus and later by the break up of that consensus. This inevitably leads us to consider what strands of opinion were either reconciled or in competition. Again, the identified themes of partnership and interest groups call for a

similar analysis. What pluralism as a theory of social order lacks is a notion of conflict and of the unequal distribution of chances to see one's interest prevail. But our analysis of the powers available to central government in these thirty years may at least demonstrate why pluralism went unchallenged for some time. For it would appear that no one party had exclusive access to any of the four bases of power and that it was therefore reasonable to talk about balance, compromise, partnership and consensus as operating principles even if contestable facts.

\* \* \* \* \*

At this point we turn to the years after 1974. There would be little disagreement that from that date to this, the DES has changed significantly the nature and extent of its control over the education system. It is hoped that, through this attempt to separate out the various elements within the powers available to central government, it will be possible to demonstrate the exact mechanisms by which this change has been brought about, before going on to look in later chapters at some aspects of their application.

## **CONTROLLING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM : 1974 TO 1988**

### **3.1 The Model Reviewed**

Choosing dates to divide one period from another is an arbitrary business : no sooner is one date selected than there seem to be overwhelming reasons why another might have been better. In proposing 1974 as the start of the final period, I hope it may be seen as a boundary with somewhat blurred edges. In choosing it, I shall be pointing to a change of style in the relationship between central and local government, particularly with regard to the curriculum, marked partly by precise events, and partly by a change in 'climate'.

There is some support from Fowler (1981) who traces the "switchover" from the "disjointed incrementalism" of the sixties to the "disjointed decrementalism" of the middle seventies onwards to the oil crisis of December 1973. In this he explicitly disagrees with Kogan (1975) who locates the climactic in 1968 when the Labour government was first obliged to introduce public expenditure cuts, including a further deferment of ROSLA plans. He sees this as marking the beginning of a period of contraction which re-surfaced in 1970 when the Conservatives increased the price of school meals and cut the provision for school milk. The pattern of retrenchment was confirmed, according to Kogan, by the 1972 White Paper (see Chapter 2) which marked a new level of attention to financial control, and demonstrated a new awareness of how policy could be shaped by medium to long term planning. However, Fowler regards the events of 1968 as "harbingers", the meals and milk episode as "irrelevant" because marginal, and the 1972 White Paper as a legitimate attempt to shift priorities rather than retrench. Moreover, he suggests that the oil crisis did not entirely put an end to incremental decisions, and he cites as evidence the more generous provision of resources for students on advanced technical courses, the adult literacy programmes and, most notably, the doubling of the nursery building programme. Real problems and a real swing towards contraction date from the Public Expenditure White Paper of 1976 which marked a reduction in real terms in educational expenditure. This was brought about by the acute need for all-round economic restraint (demanded by the International Monetary Fund to whom the Labour government had been obliged to go

for financial succour), and justified in some degree by the fall in pupil numbers and the consequent opportunity to cut back on teacher training.

Such debate merely demonstrates how far the selection of dates is arbitrary. Choosing a date reflects a focus, the choice of a particular aspect of policy. Both Kogan and Fowler take educational expenditure as the key issue : other years may seem of greater significance in relation to, for example, the development of explicit policies for the curriculum. Fowler appears to follow a 'bases of power' argument very similar to that being pursued in this thesis. Of the sixties, he writes

*above all else the Secretary of State exercised power and influence through the provision of resources such as money for building programmes.... The power of the purse in the sixties was the major one. In the seventies it became much less important because the purse was relatively so much smaller.*

*(Fowler, 1981, pp15-16)*

But in the seventies local authorities are being pressured by central government because

*the Secretary of State (is) having to legislate because he or she has no funds to hand out...*

*central government (is) having to legislate more and more .. since it is the only way it can get its way, having lost the power of the purse.*

*(pp25-26)*

These comments support the argument that there are various types of power available to the DES and that they have varied over time. I shall later take issue with Fowler's view of the seventies and early eighties when I argue that the DES has now discovered (or rather has been shown by example) strategies for policy implementation through the control of resources, and that this is at least partly a direct product of expenditure restraint. First however, it will be useful to review the argument about the bases of power, to refine the categories in the light of the discussion in the previous chapter, and to anticipate some of the themes that will arise in the detailed examination of this final period.

It has become clear that the coercive base is considerably wider than legislation or statutory regulation. The DES issues a constant stream of admonitory circulars, memoranda, and so forth which are the outward sign of the executive function of the civil service. It is the task of government departments to administer and to interpret legislation, and the process of doing so results in a flow of communications. It would be an impossible task for LEAs to consider minutely the extent to which each element in these interchanges, most of which require some kind of action or response on their part, is obligatory in the sense that sanctions will result from non-compliance. There



are, of course, examples of refusal to respond : one authority did not make a return when Shirley Williams issued Circular 14/77 asking for details of their curriculum policies (DES, 1977c), and there were numerous examples of responses so dilatory as to be virtual rejections. The DES, after all, lacks a regional structure and the task of detailed supervision was far beyond the district offices of HMI, despite their responsibility to act as channels of communication between centre and locality. However, the sheer weight of administrative requirements is coercive in its effect. The emerging managerial and planning structures which we traced in the last chapter, substantially increased the pressure on LEAs to respond to the demands and enquiries of the DES. When we add to this the 'politics of deference', we can see that the coercive base does indeed amount to a lot more than explicit legislation and regulation.

The control of examinations is another significant form of coercion. In the inter-war years, we saw that this was an effective, valued and widely-accepted power despite a growing opinion that teachers should have more influence (see, for example, the Norwood report, SSEC, 1943). In the post-war years, the centre did release its grip ; but after 1974, the re-establishment of control over examinations and other forms of accreditation, and the institution of new forms of testing, are important themes, demonstrating a renewed interest in this form of regulatory and therefore coercive power.

The remunerative base is the one high-lighted in Fowler's analysis. In Chapter 2, I suggested that in the inter-war years expenditure was largely permissive. In the post-war years of expansion, the 'power of the purse' was crucial. A good Minister was one who secured an ever-increasing share of public expenditure. However in the late fifties, the switch to block grant greatly reduced the Minister's influence over actual spending. The major power over resources related to volume rather than use. Even allowing for the enormous inertia of educational spending, where most expenditure goes to meet the financial obligations created by earlier decisions, there was enough scope at the margins for substantial LEA and institutional discretion. But by the seventies we noted that new planning and financial strategies had emerged which increasingly linked spending to medium and long term planning, and thus to the formulation and implementation of policy. These new techniques meant that education became increasingly subject to corporate planning practices. Thus we now have to recognise a future orientation to the remunerative base which greatly increased its potency as a basis for the power of the centre. This tendency was even further strengthened by the attempts of government, including the Labour administration from 1976, to curb public expenditure, especially that of local authorities.

Sophisticated financial planning generates enormous demands for information and there is therefore a coming together and mutual re-inforcement of the remunerative and the knowledge/information bases of power. The new planning procedures were partly responsible for transforming the role of HMI who were in increased demand as monitors of the system. However it would be wrong to see that as the principal function of the Inspectorate, or to see HMI as the main generators of the data which the department required. What needs to be recognised is the increasing dependence of government on a flow of data about all aspects of social and economic life; and the consequent translation of every aspect of LEA provision into statistical returns to the DES. Technology has, of course, both serviced and stimulated this demand for information. The space between Matthew Arnold's leisurely essays on the state of the elementary schools, when HMI wrote travel diaries about their journeys through the system, and the computerised returns of the 1980s, demonstrates the total transformation of the nature of information and therefore of its potential as a source of power.

In examining the earlier periods, distinctions have had to be drawn between knowledge and information. Knowledge is, after all, far more than information. It relates closely to expertise, and to study its genesis we have to consider who is making authoritative contributions to current educational theory and practice, and where they are located. In the 1918-39 years, such knowledge generation was the preserve of a relatively small 'Establishment' intelligentsia, mostly composed of people in positions of power in prestigious institutions. To their number was added the increasingly influential psychologists. In the 1944-74 period, we saw how this group widened to include sociologists, economists, philosophers, curriculum developers, teacher educators and journalists. Towards these people the DES adopted a stance of openness and sometimes responsiveness, but made few attempts to control or participate. Post 1974, we shall see the DES actively endeavouring to find and develop alternative sources of intellectual support and opinion leadership in a manner underlines the significance of knowledge as a power base.

Once again there is an overlap with a further base, this time the normative. There is a sense in which expertise counts for little in terms of power and influence until it is recognised. Recognition is a potent form of symbolic reward, resulting in enhanced status and often in the more tangible reward of appointment or promotion to desirable positions. The capacity to bestow such rewards is therefore a valuable form of power. However, I have suggested that during the post-war years there were many alternative sources of symbolic rewards : in some circles, the DES seemed a tedious necessity of

relatively marginal importance to the real business of education, a sort of bus conductor to the whole enterprise. But to cover the developments of the final period, it seems likely that we shall have to expand this category also. Not only shall we see the DES stake a claim to a monopoly in the bestowal of patronage; but we shall also have to consider the extent to which the department set out to shape public opinion, to allocate praise and blame, and to establish its own agenda for educational reform. Thus the normative base is expanded to include the promotion of a discourse, the terms and values of which then become the basis for the distribution of symbolic rewards.

In the preceding pages, I have reviewed the model of power introduced in the last chapter. Three conclusions can be drawn. First, no taxonomies of the kind described can be regarded as static and, in order to have a useful analytical framework, we shall have to allow for the fact that they change over time. The vigour with which systems seek for new forms of power must surely contribute to their refinement. Second, there are substantial areas of overlap between the different bases and this too would appear to have increased over recent years. Third, there is diversity within each base sufficient to at least raise questions as to whether they should be further sub-divided. In the interests of clarity, however, I propose to retain only the four categories. The next section of this chapter will provide an overview of the events of the years 1974-88 in order to lay the ground for the final section; at that point, I shall use the framework refined in the first part of this chapter to analyse the events of those years, focussing once again on the capacity of the DES to make and to implement policy, particularly of the kind which directly affects the learning experiences of school pupils.

### **3.2 An Overview : 1974 to 1988**

#### ***The Social and Economic Context***

The years from 1974 began with five years of Labour government, followed by a long period of Conservative administration with election victories in 1979, 1983 and again in 1987. As already noted, the Labour administration faced severe economic problems, a period of world recession, a persistent balance of payments problem, frightening levels of inflation and - towards the end of their five years - rising unemployment. In terms of educational policy, the government had to fight hard not to lose ground. Despite the attempt to sustain some growth, there was little that could be done to hold the line against expenditure cuts; as we have seen, the Public Expenditure White Paper of 1976 marked the beginning of a decline in educational spending, not just in terms of the total spent but also relative to other areas of public spending. This

decline continued under the Conservatives. Capital expenditure was particularly hard hit, dropping by 25% between 1978 and 1985. Had it not been for the fact that local authorities continued to spend 5-6% more on education each year than the government had planned, the decline would have been even greater (Travers, 1986a, p135).

The Labour government made some attempt to maintain its long alliance with the education system and its teachers. Teachers' salaries were very substantially increased as a result of the Houghton committee's recommendations in January 1975; and the Clegg committee was set up to review the gap between teachers' pay and that of other occupational groups. The Education Act of 1976 was intended to consolidate the comprehensive school system by requiring the re-organisation of the remaining selective schools and by forbidding LEAs to support children at direct-grant schools. Yet the years were chiefly marked, not by the confident pursuit of policy after a brief Conservative interruption, but rather by a mounting uncertainty, concern and complaint about education. It is worth pausing to note that these years were marked by social, economic and particularly industrial upheaval. It was a Labour government which introduced a wage freeze in 1966, de-valued in 1967, and faced a record level of unofficial strikes in 1968-69. The Conservatives then endeavoured to take a strong line with the unions with a new Industrial Relations Act and a tough wages policy, but in the end they lost the 1974 election on a "Who governs Britain?" platform after a prolonged confrontation with the miners and the introduction of the notorious '3-day week'. Labour returned with a Social Contract already agreed with the unions ; but by the mid-seventies, the oil price increases and a looming sterling crisis convinced the government that it could not find the funds to keep its side of the bargain. Inflation was getting dramatically worse and unemployment, especially among young people, was beginning to rise.

These few facts demonstrate that the very substantial changes which have convulsed the education system since the mid-seventies, affecting the curriculum, the institutional structures and the power relationships within the education system, emerged at and from a time of very general social upheaval. There is a dangerous tendency to treat education as if it were insulated from the rest of life but that is to deny useful comparative insights. However, there is no doubt that the education system was itself a focus for many of the uncertainties and ideological battles of these years : and so it still remains.

Salter and Tapper (1985) have analyzed the attempt to develop an explicitly Conservative ideology during the years in opposition between 1964 and 1970. There

was a widely shared view that a fundamental intellectual task confronted the party. Cowling (1978) wrote that the country's intelligentsia had been responsible for creating and validating a Labour platform and for "making Conservative criticism seem morally and intellectually disreputable". As a reaction to this apparent left-wing bias in thinking about social planning, Edward Heath established around thirty policy groups to look at all aspects of public life, drawing upon the expertise of sympathetic academics, industrialists and journalists. But those further to the Right thought his approach pragmatic rather than principled; many found that their ideas were more acceptable in the party after Mrs Thatcher became leader in 1975. From that date, the ideology of the New Right found a means of expression through bodies such as the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA), established in 1958 as a pro-market research body but with little influence until the Thatcher years : it was later to give house-room to the National Council for Educational Standards. Another very influential body, with a particular interest in education, was the Centre for Policy Studies, established by Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher in 1974.

After economics, education has been perhaps the most favoured topic for New Right polemics. The issue emerged publicly in the Black Papers, five of which were published between 1969 and 1977. These pamphlets, edited by Cox and Dyson and with contributions from Rhodes Boyson, a future junior Minister at the DES, attacked the schools for low standards, poor discipline, and the unproductive and unsophisticated use of 'progressive' pedagogies. Employers, also, were increasingly vocal about the standards of literacy and numeracy among young employees. Such complaints were joyfully seized upon by the media who found here a rich vein for investigative journalism and moral indignation. The William Tyndale affair was glorious confirmation that the criticisms were justified. But this is not to deny that there were serious issues confronting the schools. The school leaving age had not been raised to 16 until 1971 and many schools were still facing problems in developing programmes to motivate all their older pupils. There were unresolved problems concerning education in inner city areas; uncertainties about curriculum provision for an ethnically and culturally pluralist population; falling rolls, which were already severe in the primary sector; and an urgent need to re-think 14-19 education in the light of new demands from industry and escalating youth unemployment.

### ***Central government and curriculum control***

By the time that Callaghan made his famous speech at Ruskin College in October 1976, there had been at least seven years of anxious debate. The speech was intended and taken as a sign that government now proposed to play a central part in the review and subsequent control of the school curriculum. Fowler (1981, p24) cites this episode as evidence that 'trends' alone do not result in new policy initiatives : in analyzing the politics of education, "you have to look for a trigger mechanism". Certainly, this speech can be seen as the point at which talk began to turn into action.

A full account of the speech, of the events which led up to it and followed on from it, can be found in Chitty (1989), and there are also comments in the autobiography of Callaghan (1987) and his senior policy adviser, Bernard Donoughue (1987). Here, however, I am concerned only with those elements which relate to the changing strategies of central government in relation to devising and implementing policy.

Donoughue claims (TES, 29 May 1987) to have advised Callaghan to identify a few areas of policy where he might seek to make an impact. Education seemed a suitable candidate. Certainly it was demonstrably 'an issue' in 1976, and had been for some years. It was an issue defined outside government - this cannot be said of all issues - but it was politically untenable for the government of the day not to have a policy in relation to that issue. The inevitable implication of having a policy is that it must then be activated by a programme or programmes, for otherwise commitment to the policy itself rapidly loses credibility.

Callaghan had perhaps not thought through to that stage, which may explain the unsatisfactory nature of the ensuing 'Great Debate'.

Politicians are not alone in needing to develop policies in response to issues : civil servants also identify issues, and a central part of their function is to anticipate the political response. Inevitably they become committed to certain policy preferences of their own. Thus the department would appear to have had a series of initiatives already in train which were not inconsistent with Callaghan's aspirations (Salter and Tapper, 1981). In 1975 the OECD examiners had commented on the role of the department in relation to the curriculum. Having recognised that senior civil servants in Britain are, in the continental sense, "notables" by virtue of their "prestige, acquaintanceships and natural authority", they went on to discuss the "momentum of thought and action which develops within a department". The examiners recognised that DES officials

*endeavour to identify a social consensus as to the priority issues towards which policy planning could be directed .... They do not make the plan in answer to their own beliefs and desires alone. But neither do they make it as passive respondents to the political process or the general will of the community.*

*(OECD,1975)*

There are few direct references in the Examiners' report to the curriculum but in the concluding Confrontation Meeting, we catch a glimpse of the "momentum of thought and action ... within the department" when it is reported that the Permanent Secretary "did wonder aloud whether the Government could continue to debar itself from what had been termed 'the secret garden' of the curriculum".

In the following year the House of Commons Expenditure Committee reviewed the OECD report, and (after what seemed, to this eye-witness, a far from friendly cross-examination of the Permanent Secretary, the Senior Chief Inspector, and other officials), they concluded

*The DES, itself, would like to see the ambiguities attaching to the Secretary of State's position in relation to the curriculum clarified ... We think he (the Secretary of State) should be prepared strongly to encourage and participate in educational development without seeking to control it. In this, HMIs would have a key role to play ... The Committee does not share the view that the curriculum is a 'secret garden' which none but the initiated may enter*

*(House of Commons, 1976, p7)*

There is a similar remark in the Yellow Book, a private but leaked DES memorandum to the Prime Minister :

*The time has probably come to try to establish generally acceptable principles for the composition of the secondary curriculum for all pupils, that is to say a "core" curriculum.*

*(TES, 15 October 1976, extracts from the Yellow Book)*

The memorandum reported that HMI were already working on this task, and were preparing "to publish discussion papers and to run a national in-service course for teachers".

Thus it is clear that the intention to expand the role of central government in relation to the curriculum was already under discussion well before the Ruskin speech, perhaps only awaiting a "trigger mechanism" to launch it. A succession of documents followed. But first came a series of national conferences in early 1977 at which the government's 'partners' were invited to agree that the Secretary of State should "seek to establish broad agreement .... on a framework for the curriculum". There followed the Green Paper Education in Schools : a consultative document (DES 1977b) which

repeated word for word the quotation from the Yellow Book given above, with only one significant change : the word 'probably' is now omitted for

*It would not be compatible with the duty of the Secretaries of State ....  
to abdicate from leadership on educational issues.*

*(para 2.19)*

Over the following years the momentum was sustained. The next step was the issue of Circular 14/77 which invited LEAs to report on their curriculum policies. The Circular was issued by a Labour government, but the replies were collated and issued (DES 1979a) under the new Conservative administration, with little apparent change of tone or purpose bar an increased emphasis on "no additional resources". Again we read that Ministerial responsibility required "an overall view of the content and quality of education seen from the standpoint of national policies and needs". Only one authority - Kingston-upon-Thames - had declined to respond, though 71 replies were late and another 14 were very late. But in making their responses, however dilatory, the local authorities conceded the right of central government to demand such information. The Report claimed that many authorities did not "formulate curricular policies and objectives which meet national policies and objectives".

The next year the DES published its Framework for the Curriculum (DES 1980a), and in the same month HMI published a parallel document A View of the Curriculum (DES 1980b). The DES document argued that LEAs should closely monitor the curriculum and attainments of their schools in order to ensure compliance with the authority's own policy, which should itself reflect national needs as defined by the DES. Replies to 14/77 and recent HMI surveys of primary and secondary schools (DES 1978c and 1979b) suggested that LEAs were falling down on that task. The point to notice here is that the DES appeared not to have solved the problem of achieving control of the curriculum through the seemingly unavoidable agency of the local authorities. The DES document set out in considerable detail the department's proposals for a curriculum "framework", described in terms of subjects and even percentages of time to be devoted to each; but implementation of the policy has apparently to be left to the will of the LEA. The DES was still relying on exhortation and moral persuasion. No specific dead-lined action was required of LEAs.

After a year of rather strenuous criticism from many parties, the DES issued its most confident statement to date, The School Curriculum (DES 1981a) which accommodated some of the criticisms made of its earlier document. Several concessions were made. This time, however, action was required. In Circular 6/81, LEAs were given two years



to report on the progress they were making towards installing the national framework. Here, then, was an obligation which presumably authorities were required to meet. In the event, it appeared that few did because two years later a further Circular, 8/83, was issued, reminding them of what was required. Many authorities had in fact made progress, but one has to assume that their efforts were either inadequate or had become irrelevant to the further development of national policy because no summary report of their responses was ever published. In January 1985, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities asked how "broad agreement" could be achieved if the Government ignored the LEAs' replies to 8/83 (TES 25 January 1985). Perhaps publication would not have been able to conceal an unacceptable diversity of view. Even more significantly, it might have demonstrated for all to see that the DES statements on curriculum to date had relied heavily on exhortation and norm-setting - and that this strategy was provoking only a very slow and uneven response. In Better Schools (DES 1985a), the next authoritative DES document on curriculum and related matters, this issue was obviously still rumbling. It is stated there that

*an explicit curricular policy will shortly inform the work of nearly every LEA, but that many authorities' policies do not yet extend to all the matters for which local policies are needed.*

*(DES, 1985a, para 42, my emphasis)*

Better Schools stands as the final document in a series which has come to resemble a 19th century novel, issued chapter by chapter, with a common theme but also unanticipated changes in direction and a succession of sub-plots. In many ways it reads like a summing up of the debates of the previous decade and in particular of the work of Sir Keith Joseph, one of the most active and influential of Secretaries of State for many years. Yet Better Schools does far more than merely re-cap the debate of former years. This document is bursting with talk of initiatives under way, and of the implications for action across the whole gamut of school issues, expressed with force and clarity. It will therefore be useful to review the new policies included in the document and the administrative strategies that were proposed to deal with them.

Paragraph 29 states that "action is necessary in four areas of policy". The first is concerned with "the need to secure greater clarity about the objectives and the content of the curriculum". This was later (para 81) re-stated as "a more precise definition .... of what pupils of different abilities should understand, know and be able to do", and then re-formulated yet again into "a definition of attainment targets". Better Schools concedes that this will be no easy task. Looking backwards from the early nineties, it is almost surprising to read that "Objectives cannot be agreed for all time" and that

"Even initial agreement will take several years to accomplish" (para 32). But the document contains various suggestions as to how these agreements would be forged : through further policy documents, such as Science 5-16 : a statement of policy (DES 1985c) ; HMI publications "designed both to inform and to stimulate discussion" ; and as the product of the APU surveys in English, mathematics and science. These moves would however stop short of "national syllabuses".

The second area for action concerned the reform of examinations and the improvement of assessment which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The third area concerned efforts "to improve the personal effectiveness of teachers and the management of the teacher force". After reviewing the policy for teacher training set in motion by Teaching Quality (DES 1983e), the Secretary of State announced that the funding of INSET would be re-structured (see Chapter 6) and that he planned to introduce a scheme for teacher appraisal.

The fourth area for action is concerned with the need

*to reform school government and to harness more fully the contribution which can be made to good school education by parents, employers and others outside the education service.*  
(para 29.4)

The proposals represent a detailed response to the consultation which had followed the issue of the Green Paper Parental Influence at School (DES 1984b), during which parent organisations had resisted the idea that they should have 50% of the seats on governing bodies. Better Schools set out revised proposals, later incorporated into the Education Act of 1986. The explicit objective was to reduce LEA influence while at the same time recognising that governing bodies cannot be totally unconstrained by the responsibilities of the authority. (At this stage, 'opting-out' on the lines permitted in the Education Reform Act of 1988 does not appear to have been contemplated.)

Better Schools contains two or three smaller items which can be seen as further nails in the coffin which was being slowly constructed for LEA autonomy. First, the DES indicated plans to conduct a survey of the role of local advisory services (para 267); and second, it announced that LEAs would be asked to respond to HMI inspection reports, particularly in so far as there were implications for other schools (para 269). A third item to note is the reminder that the Education Support Grant scheme was due to get under way in the academic year 1985-86 and that this would have "an important contribution to make towards a limited and cost effective re-

deployment of expenditure into activities which particularly advance the shared objectives set out in this White Paper" (para 284).

With the publication of Better Schools it becomes clear that many of the DES aspirations in relation to the curriculum, or to matters which have a direct bearing or influence upon the curriculum, are now being expressed in terms of action. These actions are of very disparate kinds - surveys, pilot projects, consultation processes, legislation, public relations, financial arrangements - but they show that the DES had moved beyond pious and hopeful exhortation, and was now finding scope within its statutory rights and traditional role, to expand both its influence and its authority over the system. These various devices were only just beginning to gel into a coherent strategy : but they do represent an attempt to explore the various types of power available to the centre. Moreover, it is clear that the local authorities, the teacher associations and that part of the 'educational world' which was opposed to the increasing drift towards heavy centralisation, were not displaying an equal sophistication in exploiting the power available to them.

### **3.3 Expanding Powers : the Model Explored**

#### ***The Coercive Base***

It is now time to go back to the model of power developed in this thesis and to use it to chart the how of the department's aggrandisement.

A convenient starting point is the observation by Fowler (1981), already noted, that as the Secretary of State lost the 'power of the purse', so he or she was obliged to resort to legislation. However legislation remained relatively scanty during the seventies. The only major parliamentary Act of the Labour administration was that of 1976 which sought to enforce comprehensive re-organisation, an Act repealed by the Conservatives in 1979. One additional provision terminated the direct grant system. A short Education Bill was introduced in 1978, aimed at helping LEAs to make a planned response to falling rolls ; but this too was reversed by Conservative legislation in 1980.

The Education Act of 1980 was an attempt to make immediate policy changes in the direction desired by the in-coming government : each element within this legislation was the product of prior thinking or commitment dating from five years of opposition. It contained the first moves to widen the membership of governing bodies by making the representation of parents a statutory requirement (many authorities had already

adopted this practice). New procedures concerning admission to schools were laid down in order to allow parents a greater degree of choice between schools and hence capacity to influence the decisions of their LEAs about closures. Schools were now required to produce brochures, providing much fuller information to parents about such matters as their aims, curricula, and examination results, thus apparently encouraging parents to make more informed comparisons between schools. Further provisions of the 1980 Act concerned procedures for the establishment, change of character or closure of schools, with new arrangements for the consideration of objections ; another measure was designed to restrain LEA action by facilitating local protest. And finally, it was in this Act that the government honoured its commitment to the independent schools by announcing the introduction of the Assisted Places Scheme, possibly as compensation for the ending of the direct grant system (Salter and Tapper, 1985).

The Education Act of 1981 was concerned with the implementation of changes in special education following on from the recommendations of the Warnock committee (DES, 1978f). This was, broadly speaking, a reformist measure of the 'old' type, for it reflected developments in specialist professional thinking and sought, in a consensual style, to work out the implications for the school system. Later problems were largely about the extent to which local authorities were able or willing to implement its requirements, given restrictions on both resources and expertise.

There are two more important Acts to note, both remarkable for the degree to which their provisions reach into the heart of curriculum practice. The first of these, passed in 1984, was the Education (Grants and Awards) Act. As its name suggests, it was concerned with finance ; the system of grant aid which it inaugurated will in large part be the topic of the second half of this thesis. For the moment, the point to note is that it was this legislation which established the Education Support Grant scheme, anticipated in Better Schools (DES 1985a). Under the Act, the DES took the power to retain 0.5% of planned educational expenditure. This money was then made available to LEAs which chose to put up proposals for pilot programmes or in-service training which met a government list of short to medium term curriculum policies. As already noted, there were many echoes between the priorities listed and the overall programme enunciated in Better Schools. In the first year the areas to be supported included pilot schemes for Records of Achievement, changes in mathematics teaching to reflect the recommendations of the Cockcroft committee, developments in the management of the teaching force, and the promotion of information technology. For 1986-87, further categories were added. In 1986, the Education (Amendment) Act confirmed the Secretary of State's satisfaction with the ESG scheme by increasing the retained

element of planned expenditure from 0.5% to 1%, and yet more. policy-oriented, categories were added.

It is not of course easy to disentangle coercive from remunerative power in this development. As experienced by the system, ESGs are clearly financial devices for they are a means of securing extra resources in areas where the LEAs themselves may very well be committed to change. Nevertheless, they clearly represent a deliberate attempt to direct local initiative to centrally selected priorities by coercive means. The use of resources in this manner was previously outside the department's authority and the strategy had therefore to begin with the assumption of new powers through the process of legislation.

It is interesting to see how these new powers were buttoned up. The 1984 Act announced that Regulations would be issued providing for ESGs as a percentage grant (ie. the DES would pay only 70% of approved expenditure), and that it would only be payable "in respect of prescribed expenditure within the financial year". Furthermore, it was envisaged that "payment ... shall be dependent upon the fulfilment of such conditions as shall be determined ... by the regulations" and that LEAs would be required "to comply with regulations made". This was not mere bureaucratic language. The implication was that these funds were not be siphoned off into other activities, and therefore there was an assumption of careful monitoring. Moreover, the sums to be spent on these centrally identified priorities would amount to 43% more than the total retained in the DES, because LEAs had to find £30 from their own budgets for every £70 provided from the ESGs. Finally it must be remembered that the retained money was not extra educational funding because the total block grant for education was to be top-sliced.

The Education (no. 2) Act of 1986 was a major piece of educational legislation, dealing with further reform of governing bodies and the funding of in-service education for teachers. But there were also important supplementary elements, some of which were the product of amendments made during the passage of the Bill through the parliamentary process, notably in the House of Lords. These unexpected additions can be seen as extraneous to, but not necessarily unwelcomed by, government. They related to measures to "ensure" freedom of speech in the universities; to the need to avoid political indoctrination and to guarantee the "balanced treatment" of political issues in schools; to ensure that sex education in schools pays due attention to "moral considerations and the value of family life"; and to abolish corporal punishment.

Another important section concerned teacher appraisal : the Act gave the Secretary of State powers to "make regulations requiring LEAs to make regular appraisals".

It was measures such as those reported in the past few lines - matters to do with the tone and style as well as the content of education - which seemed so strange as matters for legislation. For years such topics might reasonably have been areas over which the DES endeavoured to exercise some influence, to stimulate professional debate by means of HMI activity ; but the idea that they must now be the object of specific statutory control demonstrates the extent to which legislation grew in significance during these years. It is also an indication of the degree to which the traditional form of transactions between the educational 'partnership' no longer seemed adequate to government.

However, the main intention of the 1986 Act was to focus on the third and fourth "areas for action" identified in Better Schools : the reform of school governance and the management of the teaching force. The significance of each for the curriculum is indirect but nevertheless important. In giving parents a bigger stake in the government of schools, and in ensuring that representatives of the community including its business interests were co-opted, the legislation severely curtailed the power of the local authority, for it could no longer nominate a majority of each Board. While the Act recognised the continuing responsibility of LEAs to determine the staffing, and the broad issues of school structure and finance, governors were now to be more directly responsible for the development and execution of school policy and were required to ensure that parents had information about the school. The overall thrust towards letting the consumer influence the product was unmistakeable. In a speech to the Oxford Union in 1975, Sir Keith Joseph had argued that the Conservative party should seek the "common ground" between its policies and the aspirations of the people for, he said, "most people want to be served, not to be changed". He saw the common ground on education as a concern for basic skills, social attitudes and a preparation for work (Joseph, 1976). This legislation was intended to seek out that common ground, for its object was to reduce the influence of the local bureaucrats, the local professionals and indeed the local politicians, in favour of the "consumer" as both parent and employer. It did not, however, do anything to reduce the influence of central government ; for on the see-saw of power, the centre becomes weightier as the authority of the locality is progressively lightened.

The re-organisation of in-service training for teachers via the introduction of specific grant will be analyzed in some depth in Chapter 6 as an example of the impact of

changing patterns of resource distribution. It is sufficient to note here that this was another piece of legislation designed to allocate new powers to the Secretary of State, and that there were very real similarities between the system now established for INSET and the earlier provision for ESGs. The move over INSET is another instance of overlap between the coercive and the remunerative ; and it illustrates the fact that in order to advance its grip upon the other bases of power, the DES has frequently to change the existing rules of the game by introducing legislation. However this is not invariably so, because not all new coercive powers are based upon changes in statute. The chief example of this is the way in which the DES chose to revive very long-standing powers in relation to national policies on examinations.

It has long been a commonplace in the comparative study of school systems to say that, whereas many countries control the curriculum from the centre and then leave assessment in the hands of the teachers, Britain does things the other way round. Broadfoot (1985) describes this as a contrast between process evaluation and product evaluation. She characterises the British education system as one of strong control (thanks to the emphasis on product evaluation in the form of public examinations) ; and she suggests that although this used to be essentially de-centralised control, there is now an increasing tendency towards centralisation. Strong but de-centralised control seems an accurate description of the position in the post-war years when the enormous influence of examinations over the curriculum was in the hands of the university controlled GCE boards and the teacher controlled CSE boards. The role of central government was essentially responsive, agreeing to some proposals such as the transformation of the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate into GCE O and A-levels in 1951, and the introduction of the CSE in 1964 ; and resisting others, notably those put forward by the Schools Council for the reform of sixth form examinations or for the introduction of a common examination at 16+. However, in the early eighties there seems to have been a rather rapid realisation in the DES that product evaluation had many advantages as a means of exerting control specifically over the curriculum, but also more widely over the performance of teachers and schools. In a notably frank interview, James Hamilton, Permanent Secretary at the DES from 1975 to 1982, made this very clear :

*Looking back over his seven years at the DES and the debates that led to the publication of the Department's policy document, The School Curriculum, Sir James admits that the Government has shown too much "delicacy" about making its presence felt in the classroom..... While acknowledging that LEAs have a "pivotal role" to play in the evolution of educational policy and the implementation of educational development, he says there is an argument for the DES acting "more directly in certain limited areas of the curriculum"..... The present*

*exercise of reforming examinations at 16-plus should be seen as part of this process of establishing greater central control, he says.*

*(TES, 1.7.83)*

From this one must assume that, by 1982/83, the DES had realised that exhortations about common aims and national frameworks were having only a restricted impact and that more direct means were required. In the space of two or three years the role of central government in relation to the control of examinations was transformed. The most far reaching changes concerned the introduction, 11 years after it was first proposed by the Schools Council, of a common examination for 16 year olds, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), but there were also significant changes at 17+. Broadfoot suggests that although this period also saw the growth of self-assessment in the form of profiles, and also new developments in graded assessment, the thrust of government policy was overall an attempt

*to exert greater influence through the accountability network and to make greater use of those assessment procedures which control the content and process of education rather than individual achievement.*

*(Broadfoot, 1985, my emphasis)*

I therefore intend to stress those aspects of the new procedures which have a particular emphasis on content and process.

By the mid-eighties, government appeared to have decided that *de facto* educational goals could be clearly encapsulated in the examination system. (The fact that the Education Reform Act extended this principle through the establishment of national testing at 7, 11, 14 and 16 re-inforces this point.) Parents, employers, pupils and even teachers are, on a day to day basis, prepared to accept the achievement of particular certification as the rationale for school activities. Thus the specification of what is to be tested moulds what is taught and examination success is a key element in any consideration of accountability. Teachers accept the importance of good grades both as fulfilling their moral obligation to assist individual pupils through the system, and as indicating that they have met their professional obligation to achieve the best performance possible with any group of students. The Education Act of 1980 first linked professional accountability to examination success by demanding that results be published. The combined effect of this, and of greater parental choice between schools (based not infrequently on uncritical estimates of a school's past performance), was to make schools far more open to both public and official evaluation.

What then of content and process ? The Schools Council, after extensive feasibility studies into the development of a common 16+ examination, forwarded their report to the DES in 1976. As Nuttall says



*Proposals for a teacher-controlled and fairly liberal new examining system, linked to the ideal of comprehensive education, could not have been sent to the DES at a less auspicious time than the middle of 1976.*  
(Nuttall, 1984, p167)

In order to "safe-guard the public's confidence in the existing examinations", Shirley Williams felt it necessary to establish a further enquiry under Sir James Waddell. Their report recommended that there would need to be "differentiated" papers to cater for a full 60% of the ability range, much greater co-ordination of the existing examining boards, and "nationally agreed criteria" to ensure comparability between them (DES, 1978b).

It was in the development of this notion of national criteria that the DES found the strategy for control over the "content and process" of 16-plus examinations. The GCE and CSE boards began the task and presented their draft proposals to Sir Keith Joseph in early 1983. He then made it the first task of the new nominated Secondary Education Council (SEC) to advise on these draft national criteria. The definition of such criteria on a subject by subject basis, and at least the possibility that within these it would prove possible to define the level of performance expected for the award of specific grades, thus became the price, the *sine qua non*, for a system to which many teachers were strongly committed.

The range and reach of the national criteria developed for the GCSE broke entirely new ground. As adopted, they carried strong implications for both content and pedagogy. Inevitably, the criteria for each subject imposed a particular conception of that subject (which left scope for considerable disagreement about the model presented in many of them). Moreover, both the strategies for differentiation, and the insistence on practical and course work (now once more out of fashion) shaped the curriculum experience. The GCSE remained, of course, a single subject examination. Thus it did not address two of the curriculum principles which were so strongly featured in Better Schools, namely balance and breadth. However, the other two - relevance and differentiation - were key elements: the criteria insisted at all points on the practical application of knowledge and its relation to the world of work; and as we have seen, the need to target pupils towards the achievement of a particular range of grades ensures that this is a differentiated examination system, rather than a common examination (Gipps, 1986).

Space does not permit a discussion of two other significant issues surrounding these developments : namely the role of teacher assessment and the 'solution' of the

curriculum 'problem' for the 40% of pupils initially excluded from the remit of the GCSE. The first of these matters is interestingly debated by Bowe and Whitty (1984) and by Torrance (1986) who concludes that under the new dispensation teachers become involved in school-based examining directed from elsewhere rather than exercising genuine responsibility for assessment. The second was resolved both by teacher reluctance to abandon the concept of a common examination, and by an ingenious (or adroit?) manoeuvre by Joseph who declared that the performance of 80-90% of children would rise to the level currently achieved by the average ! Overall, the GCSE exercise serves to indicate the extent to which government re-captured the school examination system, and did it in such a way as to acquire substantial authority, not only over the outer framework, but also over the details of "content and process".

The development and subsequent eclipse of a new examination for 17+ students nicely illustrates once again the decisive effect on the curriculum that examination policy was now to make. As the 'new sixth' of the sixties gave way to the 'reluctant sixth' of the seventies when many stayed in school or college because of high unemployment, the curriculum offer available to the non A-level student became enormously diverse and frequently ineffective ((Dean and Steeds, 1981, p8). The Schools' Council had proposed an upward extension of the CSE to provide a single subject, non-vocational Certificate of Extended Education (Schools Council Working Papers 45 and 46, 1972/73), and with some reservations, this was finally commended to the DES by the Keohane committee (DES, 1979). Simultaneously however, the Further Education Unit had sponsored developments based on the recommendations of its own working party in A Basis for Choice (the Mansell report, FEU, 1979). This attempted to systematize the many pre-employment courses which in recent years had been offered to young school leavers in FE colleges ; it was avowedly vocational, though not narrowly job-specific. Its approach grew out of a new challenge rather than, as was the case with the CEE, evolved from an old tradition.

Faced with the necessity of choosing between these two lines of development, the new Conservative administration preferred the FEU model and the result was the emergence of the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE). Despite its subsequent problematic history, the point to note here is that the government's actions in this area, in choosing between two contrasting curriculum and educational models, demonstrates again the potency of the control over assessment.

In an important paper on the introduction of the CPVE, significantly titled Towards a Tertiary Tri-partism, Ranson (1984) has argued that the state's policy for "steering"

the education system has been guided by three under-lying pre-suppositions : "vocationalism, rationalization, and stratification". "Steering" is itself a concept which derives from the work of German sociologists, notably Habermas (1976), but with close links to the theories of "crisis" as developed by Offe which will be discussed later. Thus, in responding to the apparent need to "steer", government actions have been shaped by a conviction that the enhanced vocational preparation of young people will serve variously as a remedy for unemployment and poor economic performance, and also as an apparent "strategy" to deal with more deep-seated, politically embarrassing, but possibly intractable, social and economic problems. After vocationalism, there are two further pre-suppositions to consider : firstly, the need for the rationalization of an over-extended, over-complicated system, which appears to be about the responsible management of resources but which can also be understood as "in essence an opportunity question about the educational offering which young people should be provided with"; and secondly, a commitment to stratification, by which Ranson means "the limitation of opportunities ... through more sharply differentiated curricular experiences".

In the preceding paragraph, we have strayed into the definition of particular policy preferences. The overall purpose of this section has been rather different, namely an attempt to show how the DES set out to re-capture the strong control over the curriculum which had certainly once resided in the examination system but which had long been dispersed and diluted among a proliferation of examining boards and professional interests. However, changes in the mechanisms of policy implementation can never be divorced from the purposes behind those changes; the particular directions of policy development shape the particular powers which different actors may seek to acquire or develop. If Ranson is right in identifying vocationalism, rationalisation and stratification as the key assumptions behind government policy, we may perhaps assume that there was a view of what was wrong with the system which was the mirror image of his triad : liberal academicism, diversity, and egalitarianism. To over-turn the latter three in favour of the former required strong central action based on re-defined authority. The control of examinations at 16-plus and 17-plus (and other forms of assessment) was seen to be a particularly potent weapon in this campaign, which could complement, and in some ways surpass, legislation as a means of turning curriculum policy into practice.

## ***The Remunerative Base***

On one interpretation of events, the supposed independence of local authorities has been a popular but largely rhetorical theme. The DES oversees and regulates many elements within their provision and they in turn rely on central government to cover as much as half of their total spending. However on another view, their independence has for a long time seemed secure, even if at times embattled, in that they answer to a local electorate, and they both raise and spend a local tax to support their activities. Thus they are qualitatively and historically distinct from a mere regional or local office of the national bureaucracy. But we have seen in the last section that the DES has tended to weaken the 'local electorate' factor by re-inforcing the influence of both individual parents and governing bodies. We shall now turn to consider how government has also succeeded in limiting the financial autonomy of local authorities.

In the previous chapter some attention was paid to the Rate Support Grant. It was noted that it was essentially a block grant and, particularly after local government re-organisation in 1974, an education committee budget had increasingly to be negotiated through the local authority's Finance and general Purposes committee. Despite complaints about the constrictions resulting from corporate management structures, but nevertheless decisions about the level and priorities of spending remained largely local.

When the Conservatives were elected in 1979, they were committed to a policy of cutting public expenditure. In this they found little to help them in the existing arrangements for the RSG. In particular, the calculation of the "needs" element (60% of the RSG) created problems, for "... by concentrating on previous expenditure as a determinant of need, (it) favoured high spending authorities and offered few inducements to lower expenditure"(Dennison, 1984, p74).

Accordingly in 1981, the Conservatives introduced the notion of Grant Related Expenditure (GRE). GRE is arrived at by calculating, on a service by service basis, what local authorities need to spend in order to secure the same standard of provision as other authorities in similar circumstances. The GREs for individual services are then aggregated for each authority, and it is these composite figures which are used in calculating the overall block grant (Crispin, 1985; Travers, 1986a). Although it was not originally intended that the GRE for each service should be published, the DES has each year allowed the figure proposed for education to be publicly known. GREs therefore represent

*some form of itemization of what ought to be spent ....(Although) an authority does not have to comply with the specified figures, ... centrally they provide a framework for much tighter control (and) locally they can be used as nominated national norms by particular groups in the authority to argue for preferred spending patterns.*

*(Dennison, 1984, p76)*

The Treasury initially tried to re-inforce the impact of GREs by introducing "thresholds" and "tapering multipliers" to penalise local authorities who overspent by more than 10% of the estimate, thus forcing the high spenders to cover additional expenditure from local rates. However, this alone did nothing to deter the high spenders, while overall there was a tendency for the lower spenders to increase their expenditure. In 1982 the government therefore introduced the Local Government Finance Act which forbade the raising of supplementary rates; and in the following year, provision was made for abatement (hold-back) of grant as a penalty for overspend. In addition, overall targets were introduced, largely based on spending in the previous year, and failure to meet these resulted in further penalties. The net result has been that "government has not only introduced a new grant system, but also sponsored a major increase in central control over local decision-making" (Dennison, 1984, p79).

In 1985 Crispin argued that while expenditure cuts had been significant, the publication of GREs in relation to education had not had an enormous impact on local authority corporate management practices because authorities tended to discredit the whole exercise : the RSG was still a block grant without specific ear-marking, and in any event, education often received more than its allotted share. Equally, it had had little effect on pressure group activity because few understood it and moreover, their concerns were often unpredictable and mutually contradictory (Crispin, 1985). This, I think, may be to confuse the surface activities with the underlying realities. GREs, and indeed other forms of target setting, have tended to be calculated on the basis of local authority statutory duties at the expense of their discretionary powers. Yet it is precisely at the margins, in those areas where there is scope for discretion, that the style and quality of LEA provision is determined. Where all freedom to allocate finance has gone, there is no autonomy of any real kind. As Dennison says

*The risk, of course, from a government perspective (on the assumption that it wishes local authorities to continue) is that eventually the notion of local autonomy will be reduced to a meaningless level. It has always been circumscribed and its continued erosion must produce circumstances in which those elected (and eventually the electorate) will perceive that no choices remain open to them.*

*(Dennison, 1984, p82)*

Parallel with these inroads into the block grant system, there was a steady increase in the use of specific grant. The in-service training grants of 1982 and the Education Support Grants of 1985 have already been discussed. There have been other small examples within the range of DES activities but the major practitioner of this style of funding within the education and training system has been the Manpower Services Commission (re-named the Training Agency in 1988, thereafter the Training Commission and subsequently the Training Enterprise and Education Division : its original name will be retained in relation to the years of its usage).

As set out in Chapter 1, I intend to examine this form of funding in some depth, using the term 'categorical funding' to describe it, and exploring its operations and implications in various settings. At this point I intend merely to refer to the reasons why this form of funding had many attractions for an administration seeking to extend its powers. One such reason is the extraordinarily cumbersome nature of the RSG procedure. The DES might indicate that extra monies have been allocated for a specific purpose within the calculation of relevant expenditure submitted to the Treasury. However, despite the refinement of the GRE machinery, ultimate decisions on expenditure were a long way removed from the original calculations of need in Whitehall, and even when they are taken in accordance with DES intentions, the period from policy formulation to policy implementation seemed unacceptably long. In 1986, Travers wrote

*Local government finance is in a mess, following decades in which rates have been allowed to become badly out-of-date, and when the RSG system has increasingly been used for new and complex purposes. As education makes up about half of all local authority spending, the degeneration of the system of local finance has inevitably threatened the funding of the service.*

*(Travers, 1986b)*

Yet until the Secretary of State took powers in 1984 to retain a percentage of overall grant for the Education Support Grants, the DES had no power to target monies on areas it had identified as priorities. Travers continued

*In the past two or three years, MPs in all parties have become alarmed at the fall in spending on capital, books, equipment, and, in some cases, in general provision. Cuts in services (whether real or imagined) have led to pressure on the government to "do something" about areas where provision has been reduced. Reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate have backed the notion that many, or all, authorities had problems because of lack of spending. In addition, in the more politically-charged atmosphere of recent years, the government has come under pressure from its own supporters to speed through some of the more radical policies that they see as essential.*

The MSC pioneered the use of specific grant during the seventies to fund the provision and management of the schemes connected with its training responsibilities, particularly in relation to the young unemployed. Its funds were 'new monies', quite outside the RSG structures. One of the MSC's more remarkable and remarked characteristics has been its ability to get schemes off the ground on breathtakingly short time-scales. This was clearly a model to copy. Figure 1 (overleaf) shows the remarkable growth in this form of funding between 1983 and 1988 ; the DES spent £5 million in this way in 1983-84 and £178 million in 1987-88. Meantime the MSC continued to spend a similar sum on activities within schools and colleges, having captured from the DES 25% of the funding for non-advanced further education.

Figure 2 (overleaf) shows the flow of funds around the education system in the late eighties (Williams, 1987; Peacock et al, 1967). The diagram clearly indicates the restricted extent of direct expenditure by the DES - to the UGC for the universities, and to a very limited range of centrally funded institutions; to this, we should add the sums paid direct to independent schools under the Assisted Places Scheme. The diagram also shows that, unlike the DES, the Department of Employment, through the MSC, was putting money directly into schools and colleges, or into LEAs to support agreed programmes in those institutions. The significance of the ESG scheme is that it put a completely new track into the system (not shown in this diagram) whereby money flowed direct from DES to LEA for agreed programmes, in a manner very similar to that used by the MSC. Furthermore, as we saw above, the DES also found strategies to influence local expenditure supported by the RSG and so there is a qualitative change which the diagram again does not show.

It is interesting to consider what would happen if each line on this flow diagram were proportional to the funds that it represents. Such graphics would be difficult because of the huge sums within educational budgets which are required simply to maintain the ongoing provision. However, if it were possible to make the lines proportional not to total expenditure but rather to the amount of money over which the various spending bodies have discretion after meeting their on-going obligations, a very different picture would emerge. Policy change has been described as disjointed incrementalism - or decrementalism: it can usually occur only at the margins. Thus specific grants would acquire a significance out of all proportion to their size in relation to total expenditure.

## Growth in specific grants (£m)

### Education and Science

	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86 (Est)	1986-87 (Plan)	1987-88 (Plan)
In-service teacher training	5.1	10.2	17.5	21.0	114.0
Education Support Grant			21.0	45.0	64.0
<b>Employment</b>					
Technical & Vocational Education Initiative	6.7	25.6	31.4	40.9	58.4
TVEI-related In-service training scheme			5.0	20.0 <sup>4</sup>	n/a
Work-related non-advanced FE			65.0	110.0	112.8
Industrial Language Training Service	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.35
Capital grants for YTS accommodation	7.98	3.4	2.3	0.5	—

(Source: Second Report from the Education, Science and Arts Committee, Session 1985-86, HoC Paper 351, Table 4, pages xii-xiii; Figures for DE in 1987-88 are for 1986 Public Expenditure White Paper)

Figure 1: Growth in specific grants, 1983 - 1988  
(taken from Travers, 1986b)

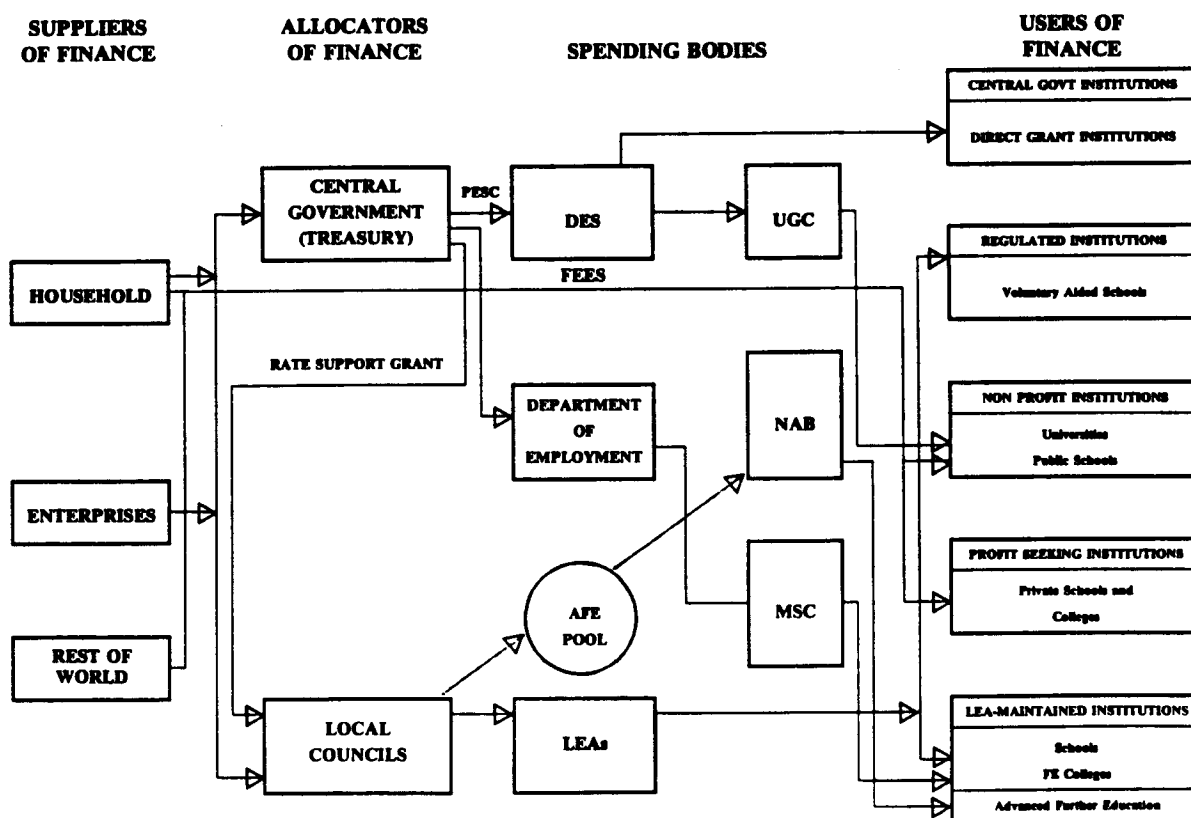


Figure 2: Principle flows of funds into education in Education  
(taken from Williams, 1987)



The manner in which the DES was able to spell out the activities for which it would provide funds under the ESG scheme showed that specific grant was and is a very precise instrument for targetting funds on the policy requirements of central government. It is scarcely surprising therefore that government has since sought to use such strategies more widely. Specific grant, as practised by the MSC, is a singularly sophisticated device in that authorities (and other agencies) 'choose' whether or not to bid for resources under these schemes, thus allowing government to maintain the semblance of local autonomy while undermining its substance. Yet this is not to deny the point made by Williams about the flow diagram : that "there has been a significant shift rightwards in the devolution of financial discretion over the details of expenditure". He cites the view of the Audit Commission that financial responsibility should be devolved to the "users of finance", and the parallel recommendation of the Jarratt committee that more financial autonomy should be given to the heads of cost centres in the universities. For, as Williams says,

*.... (the fact) that this discretion is being exercised within a tightening financial straightjacket is not simply a result of financial stringency. Accountability is being brought about through funding mechanisms rather than through administrative and legal controls.*

*(Williams, 1987, p15)*

Such mechanisms were envisaged in the quotations earlier in this chapter from the 1984 Education (Grants and Awards) Bill concerning the regulations that would cover the payment of ESGs; and we shall see them in action in the following chapter when we turn to examine the implementation of schemes funded by specific grant.

Before leaving the remunerative base, I want to refer once more to planning processes. The rationale for output budgeting procedures and for PESC reviews is essentially concerned with forecasting and then controlling costs. The PAR exercises, which deliberately set out to consider alternatives, are accompanied by details of their budgetary implications. Salter and Tapper (1981, p101) suggest that it was the Robbins report (Committee on Higher Education, 1963) that set the trend for determining policy on the basis of projected numbers, a method that was confirmed with the publication of Educational Planning Paper no 2 (DES, 1970b) which dealt with the future provision of places in higher education. Despite the claim in that document, that it "carries no implication whatever for future government policy", Salter and Tapper argue that alternative policies were not explored because, as the Paper itself said, "it is not possible to assess their impact in quantitative terms". They therefore argue that

*The more that official estimates dominate the context in which policies are made, the more these estimates are likely to become self-fulfilling prophecies and, conversely, the more that opportunities to develop the system in different ways will be neglected. Official command of the type of information input for the consideration of policy makers .... will naturally prescribe the parameters of possible policies.*

*(Salter and Tapper, 1981, p102)*

Estimates of numbers based upon the extrapolation of trends are invariably translated into money terms. What is more, some policy options are more readily costed than others and are thus more likely to appear among the options put forward by planners. The control of the planning process and the right/need to command the flows of information upon which planning is based are both essentially related to the allocation of future resources. Hence the control of the planning process is an aspect of power which derives from, and feeds back into, the remunerative base.

In 1981, Salter and Tapper argued that these tendencies in the techniques of planning result in a process of enclosure which restricts participation in policy making to specialists; that is to say, to officers at the local level and to civil servants at the national level. Thus, faced with the detailed policy agenda of the department, increasingly based on scientific planning and forecasting techniques, the Minister has only a slim chance of making a real impact on policy :

*... it is our contention that the procedures on which the policy-making process is founded increasingly circumscribe the nature of its possible content and hence the range of choices available to a minister.*

*(op cit, p104)*

By 1985 they recognised that this view needed modifying since the advent of crusading Conservative Secretaries of State, with policy agendas developed elsewhere. But, in relation to LEAs, the "administrative necessity" of the department's centralised planning procedures bears down with considerable force, requiring from them quantities of data about their schools, colleges, staff, students, budgets and so forth. At the same time, LEAs are subject to similar horizontal pressures as a result of the corporate planning process within their own authority.

Education is only one of many areas of public sector policy to have been engulfed in technical planning processes. In an article on parallel exercises in fields as diverse as transport, housing and inner city partnerships, Leach et al write

*... whatever the reality of the experience of rational approaches in central and local government, the 'language' of the rational model, with its use of the concepts of needs, objectives, alternatives, evaluation, choice, implementation, monitoring, review, etc, has become*

*increasingly common .... more and more public organisations have apparently felt obliged to go through the motions of presenting and justifying favoured policies in terms of the rational model.*

*(Leach et al, 1983)*

They go on to demonstrate that many programmes, based initially on joint planning approaches, develop into far more narrowly focussed enterprises : thus a concern for planned expenditure is replaced by moves to restrain growth; the emphasis on strategy becomes a demand to know next year's programme; and an apparent concern for local knowledge and autonomy gives way to central dominance. It is not, therefore, only in relation to education that the links between planning and resource control are clear.

### ***The Knowledge / Information Base***

*Bureaucratic administration means fundamentally the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge ... This consists on the one hand in technical knowledge which, by itself, is sufficient to ensure it a position of extraordinary power. But in addition to this, bureaucratic organisations, or the holders of power who make use of them, have the tendency to increase their power still further by the knowledge growing out of experience in the service. For they acquire through the conduct of office a special knowledge of facts and have available a store of documentary material peculiar to themselves.*

*(Weber, 1947, p339)*

If we set out to examine the means by which the power of the DES has grown, we quickly discover the central importance of knowledge. Weber's remarks suggest that knowledge is indeed the fundamental element of power. He does not, however, suggest that knowledge is a seamless whole. In the first place he distinguishes "technical knowledge", and if we look for this in the DES we have to recognise that there is a substantial and varied amount of expertise within the department. There are the obvious categories of accountant, economist, statistician, lawyer; but more significant than any of these relatively small groups is the expertise of the professional civil servant, based on years of practice, training and prolonged apprenticeship in the arts of administration. To this we must add the extensive professional expertise of those members of the teaching force who have been recruited to the Inspectorate. Thus substantial amounts of technical knowledge are to be found within the department although its depth, extent and sheer quality are strangely obscured from general view by the convention of secrecy within which bureaucracies (as Weber also says) prefer to operate : distance may, perhaps, lend enchantment.

Weber's second source of power - accumulated experience - is another characteristic well known to observers of the DES. The increased activity within the department and its growing self-consciousness about the conduct of its own affairs (in part promoted,

as we have seen, by comment and criticism from the OECD, the Expenditure Committee and many others) have resulted in a rapid growth of knowledge based on "the conduct of office". And finally, Weber's reference to the "store of documentary material peculiar to themselves" is a reminder that knowledge is a complex phenomenon, that information is an important part of it, and that the control of information is a widely acknowledged form of power.

The adoption of planning procedures based upon calculations of inputs, outputs, and the extrapolation of trends has already been identified as a powerful source of information. A major bid during these years for information relating to system outputs is to be found in the work of the Assessment of Performance Unit, set up in 1974 but not fully operational until 1978. Thereafter the Unit conducted surveys of language and maths at 11 and 15; of science at 11, 13 and 15; and of modern languages via a survey of French at 13.

There are some curious ambiguities about both the origins and the objectives of this Unit : an assessment of the return on increased educational spending, the measurement of attainment via light sampling, and the value of regular monitoring, were all mooted between 1968 and 1974. But

*There also seems to have been an increasing concern around 1970 that the DES (as distinct from HMI) was excluded from involvement with the educational curriculum, despite funding the system and ultimately being held accountable for it ... DES involvement with testing presented itself as a means of obtaining a direct evaluation of the performance of the system and consequently a means of achieving some say in curriculum content.*

*(Gipps and Goldstein, 1983, p6)*

When the APU's terms of reference were first announced, it was suggested that it would be primarily concerned with under-achievement, and the consequent implications for resource allocation. However, this task was clearly located within the broader one of monitoring the overall achievement of pupils. The Yellow Book (TES, 15.10.76) claimed that the testing programmes would "set national standards". Education in Schools suggested there was a "growing recognition that the need for schools to demonstrate their accountability to the society which they serve requires a coherent and soundly based means of assessment for the education system as a whole, for schools and for individual pupils" (DES 1977b). In 1978, the DES claimed that "information about the effectiveness of the school system is essential for the development of educational policy and the allocation of resources" (DES, 1978g). The 1979 Conservative election manifesto promised that "The government's Assessment of

Performance Unit will set national standards in reading, writing and arithmetic". And in 1985 Better Schools suggested that the APU surveys would support the definition of "broadly agreed objectives" across the school curriculum (DES, 1985a, para 81). Clearly, the APU was either a multi-purpose enterprise, or one for which no clear function was ever identified.

Gipps and Goldstein (1983) refer to the fact that the DES at no time promoted public discussion about the APU's objectives, though it seemed likely that it was seen as a way of gaining some purchase on the curriculum. Lawton (1980) takes a similar view, suggesting that the APU was a means of taking "a much more positive role in curriculum matters" and of "extending influence over the curriculum". He sees the APU as

*an interesting example of the DES 'using the back door' (ie the disguise of under-achievement) when they might have expected that their proposal would arouse anxieties and difficulties if more direct methods were used.... Although the British civil servant has often been praised for being non-political in the party political sense, civil servants are highly political in the sense of knowing how to get what they want.*  
(Lawton, 1980, p 60, my parentheses)

But it is Salter and Tapper (1981) who give an account of DES strategy which is closest to the present argument and also succeeds in transcending the many ambiguities as to the specific objectives of the APU. They argue that

*As the DES moves further in the direction of policy-making enclosure, so it must rely more on its internal means of information collecting rather than on information supplied by external groups. (p110)*

However later they say that the Unit has "failed to gather information in the complexity and depth the DES would have preferred" (p234).

The reason for that failure, if failure it was, may well lie in the absence of any attempt to identify what policy issues might be addressed by the Unit's activities. As Gipps and Goldstein say

*The aim seems to have been simply to develop a national system of assessment that functioned and was acceptable with little thought as to what specific questions it might answer.*  
(Gipps and Goldstein, 1983, p 19)

Their conclusion is that, in the APU, the DES had a "large and expensive research enterprise with considerable potential for answering a wide range of interesting and important questions ", but that it seems to have been held to a "narrowly conceived monitoring exercise".

The impact of the APU exercise to the mid-eighties was thus less decisive than its critics feared. "Blanket testing" in LEAs which critics feared would lead to increased centralisation and control (see especially Holt, 1981), did not emerge as a significant factor not least because of damaging criticism of the statistical model on which the validity of the tests was supposed to rest (Goldstein, 1981). The back-wash effect on the curriculum was also much less than anticipated. The Unit was apparently debarred from discussing its findings in its Reports, which were presented in a "facts only" format, thought suitable for an exercise which seen as on-going monitoring rather than policy-related research.

Thus, in the minds of many, the APU passed from bogey to boring routine. No matter what its observers and evaluators hoped or feared it might do, it is best understood as a strategy for monitoring and for information gathering. And in the game of information as power, we do not only need to consider what use can be made of the information held : the fact of holding information, and of being in a position to require others to provide it, in itself demonstrates and thus enhances power.

I now turn to the contribution made by HMI to the department's growing appetite for information during these years. The Rayner report of 1983 into the work of the Inspectorate made it clear that the first and over-riding duty of HMI was to assess standards and to advise the government on the state of education nationally (DES 1983a, p91) . This advice was to be both quantitative and qualitative. Part of the former responsibility was discharged through the Inspectorate's key role in the APU but in addition they increasingly undertook large and small scale surveys of whole sectors or of specific topics which usually combined quantitative analysis with commentary and critique. The most substantial efforts of this kind were the major surveys of both primary and secondary education completed in the late seventies (DES, 1978c and 1979b).

Such surveys, coupled with the routine processes of school inspection and the responsibility of representing the DES on a huge range of bodies, within and beyond education, fed HMI knowledge of the system and therefore enabled the Inspectorate to aggregate its experience and make qualitative statements, privately or publicly, on issues of concern to the department. Thus the DES Annual Reports emphasised the enhanced role of HMI in collecting and transmitting information for the department's internal purposes (DES 1977d and 1978d), and the 1978 Report specifically mentions their contribution to the RSG discussions.

So far this discussion has dealt with both APU and HMI input into the departmental information base. But there is another sense in which we must consider the knowledge/information base as a source of power, and that is in relation not to the accumulation but rather to the production of knowledge.

In examining the post-war decades, it was argued that knowledge production had become a widely dispersed activity. Academics, researchers, teacher-trainers, platform-oriented teachers, subject associations, curriculum developers and evaluators were the people who generated and fed discussions of educational issues. Moreover, as power in the system was more widely dispersed, the views and actions of local politicians and officials and of the teacher associations were of far greater importance and therefore received considerable attention. But since the middle seventies, the DES appears to have successfully colonised the knowledge-production process by promoting its own capacity to choose the issues and lead the debate, and also by systematically establishing the centrality of some groups in this matter while downgrading or, as in the case of the Schools' Council, positively abolishing others.

In this take-over, HMI have played a key role. From a low-point in the mid-seventies, the Inspectorate achieved an increasingly prominent role in knowledge production. Some of the credit for this clearly belongs to an exceptionally strong-minded and able Senior Chief Inspector, Sheila Browne. But larger wheels were turning than can be explained with reference to a single individual. Sheila Browne's successor, Eric Bolton, said in 1984

*....we are quite clearly under pressure to use more of our time in relation to policy and policy interests and developing policy than we have ever had to do in the Inspectorate's history.*

*(THES, 8.11.84)*

There were, he said, "fractionous" and "troublesome" effects accompanying the shift from "years ago when nobody bothered what HMI said" to a situation where "suddenly everybody wants to know what HMI thinks". Obviously some part of this contribution was made during internal planning meetings ; but during this period HMI came to adopt a far more positive and an increasingly prescriptive role in the public promotion of specific educational values.

When HMI produced Curriculum 11-16 (DES 1977e), it was greeted with respect but also with some amazement, because for many years the Inspectorate had not made such a direct and public statement about curriculum, or indeed, any other matter. Thereafter they went into print on many occasions. Publications were of various types.

First, there were the broad statements on curriculum policy : the ideas concerning "areas of experience" which first appeared in Curriculum 11-16 were followed up with five LEAs and further reports were issued in 1981 and 1983 (DES, 1981b and 1983c); in 1980, HMI published their View of the Curriculum (DES, 1980b) in response to a direct request from the DES, a document which many considered showed some interesting ideological differences from the parallel DES statement, A Framework for the Curriculum published a few hours beforehand (DES, 1980a); and in 1985, HMI issued a further document, Curriculum 5-16 (DES, 1985b), again well received as a balanced professional statement. Second, HMI published surveys of provision across the various sectors of the school system : primary (DES, 1978c), secondary (DES, 1979b), and middle schools (DES, 1985d), combining quantitative data with discussion and evaluative commentary. Third, HMI published a series of papers in the late seventies under the general title of Matters for Discussion and starting in 1985, a further series entitled Curriculum Matters. Although the later series appeared in a changed climate (evidenced, for example, by the reference to their function in Better Schools - see above) and they are therefore significantly more prescriptive, taken together the two series show a remarkable breadth and coverage. Fourth, there was a substantial number of one-off papers on matters as widely varied as behavioural units, travellers' children, homework and outdoor education. Fifth, there was a very substantial body of school and college inspection reports (220 in 1983 alone) together with various summaries and information booklets about procedures. Into this group must come the various trouble-shooting inspections which were carried out under the direct instruction of the Secretary of State but which did not always produce the judgements anticipated : such, for example, were the reports in the early eighties on the North London Polytechnic and on the London Borough of Haringey (Lawton and Gordon, 1987, p148). And finally, there were the Annual Surveys of Educational Expenditure, published each year since 1981, which did not hesitate to identify the negative effects of expenditure cuts.

This list adds up to a formidable body of material, much of which was, and is, acknowledged to be of high quality. One effect has been that there is hardly a curriculum issue or a topic of importance which has not been the focus of some HMI study or position statement. In the course of the decade, HMI thus moved from a position virtually outside the circle into one very close to the centre (although it has to be said that after the departure of Keith Joseph in 1986, their importance progressively declined ; they played little part in the development of the National Curriculum and they are currently under-going a major reorganisation and retrenchment).



One question concerns the degree to which HMI have been independent of the DES. At one extreme are the views of Salter and Tapper (1981 and 1985) who see HMI as the "organic intellectuals" of the department. Using arguments derived from Gramsci, they suggest that as the DES reaches for qualitatively different powers, particularly in relation to the curriculum, it needs to find sources of legitimation for its new role and for the ideological thrust of its preferred policies. During the decade to 1985, such legitimation was in large part provided by the Inspectorate whose function was

*to provide a ready and detailed framework of ideas which can be used to "guide" future consultations on the curriculum with LEAs..... One rule (was) to keep up a supply of publications and advice to try and establish the climate within which discussion takes place.*

*(Salter and Tapper, 1981, p215)*

Thus HMI's vaunted independence, and even the fact of their occasional intransigence (as in the matter of their critical Annual Surveys; or their manifestly more liberal and egalitarian views on the common curriculum) only serve to enhance their value as the intellectual under-writers of DES policy : in the view of Salter and Tapper, such hiccups helped to sustain the perception that HMI were not hired hacks, but rather independent professionals.

By 1985, they had modified their view of the unchallenged "bureaucratic dynamic" of the DES (as already discussed) but they still saw a vital role for HMI in the development of the department's powers. For example, they argue that the decision to publish inspection reports extended HMI influence over individual institutions and over LEAs, while simultaneously forcing upon the Inspectorate a need

*...to develop criteria about educational standards which can be used to assist the DES in extending its control over the curriculum. Unless the Department is in a position to pronounce authoritatively and in specific terms on what should be happening in schools .... it will never be able to activate anything other than indirect lines of control.*

*(Salter and Tapper, 1985, p220)*

Since this was written, it has become clear that the DES and, in particular, the Secretary of State has sought and found legitimation for policy from an ever widening constituency ; and indeed, "specifics" about what should be happening are emerging from other sources such as right wing "think tanks", interest groups representing employers and, latterly, the various working parties convened to develop the National Curriculum. But the Salter and Tapper arguments about the role and function of HMI from the mid seventies to the mid eighties remain strong.

An equally careful examination of HMI, and especially the theme of their independence, has been undertaken by Lawton and Gordon (1987). They argue that HMI continued to develop their independent role by advancing a distinctive curriculum model based on areas of learning and experience, a model somewhat at variance with that preferred by the DES ; by playing an important part in the reform of teacher education ; and by offering evidence on the harmful effects of government financial policies (p111). Between HMI and DES there is "not a chance difference of opinion, but a fundamental question of educational as opposed to bureaucratic values" (p113). Their conclusions concerning HMI involvement in the centralisation of control are quoted here in full :

*A good deal has been written about the dangers of centralism in education, and the tendency in recent years for the DES to increase its powers of control. The role of HMI in this is crucial : where more central influence is desirable HMI can give essential advice ; but there may be occasions when some centralist proposals are not justifiable, and if so, HMI should not hesitate to throw their weight behind professionalism in opposing the bureaucratic machine. The least desirable possibility for the future is that HMI might simply become part of the bureaucratic machine. As this book has shown, so far that possibility has been avoided.*

*(Lawton and Gordon, 1987, p155)*

Examining these two contrasting views of HMI "independence", suggests that there is no real "truth" to discover in the situation ; nor is there any real need to search for such a mirage (unless one wants to advocate a King Arthur role for the Inspectorate, a wish that appears to lurk within the Lawton and Gordon conclusion). What matters here is the extent to which the DES secured, in no small part through the activities of HMI, a much greater control of both the collection of information and the generation of knowledge. Whether or not HMI were, or saw themselves as, or were seen as, an independent body of professional educators, they proved good allies to the DES in the cause of centralisation and the concentration of power. Their threatened demise in the 1990s may prove, inter alia, a real loss to the department.

HMI must therefore be seen as an in-house force for knowledge-production, possibly securing legitimisation, but certainly generating power. But it would not be convincing if all knowledge-production were domesticated and it is not surprising that new networks favourable to DES policies were created or recruited during these years and that old ones were obliterated or down-graded. The most visible victim was the Schools' Council.

The Schools' Council was in public trouble from the time of the Yellow Book in 1976, which described its work in these terms :

*The Schools' Council has performed moderately in commissioning development work in particular curricula areas ; it has had little success in tackling examination problems .... and it has scarcely begun to tackle the problems of the curriculum as a whole. Despite some good quality staff work, the overall performance of the Schools' Council has in fact, both on curriculum and on examination, been generally mediocre. Because of this and because the influence of the teachers unions has led to an increasingly political flavour - in the worst sense of the word - in its deliberations, the general reputation of the Schools' Council has suffered a considerable decline over the last few years.*

*(quoted in the TES, 15.10.76)*

After a constitutional reform imposed by Shirley Williams which effectively removed the teacher majorities and introduced representation of both industry and parents ; and after a depressing and possibly ill-conceived study of the "Impact and Take-up" of Council projects (Steadman et al, 1978 and 1980), the Council made a somewhat desperate switch to a new style of fostering small-scale school and teacher-based development projects clustered around themes that were not inconsistent with DES priorities at the time. However, with the benefit of hindsight, one has to say that these "programmes" were swimming against a rising tide in that they assumed the superiority of practitioner-based development. They found little favour with the DES. In 1981, Keith Joseph invited Nancy Trenaman to write a report on the Council's future, but despite her advocacy (Trenaman, 1981), the Council received the long-anticipated *coup de grace* in 1982.

The Secretary of State replaced the Council with two bodies : the Secondary Examination Council (SEC), and the School Curriculum Development Committee (SCDC). As we have seen, once the department realised the potential of the 16-plus as a mechanism for curriculum control, the establishment of a nominated body to challenge the power of the school examination boards was essential. The SEC was therefore financed wholly by the DES, and its members personally appointed by the Secretary of State. The SCDC was a curious body. It was funded jointly by the DES and LEAs, who between them appointed its members. The task allotted to it was largely to complete or continue a relatively small number of projects left over from the Schools' Council's agenda. It was explicitly excluded from the task of advising the Secretary of State on curriculum policy. Both bodies were largely concerned with dissemination and regulation : they were not allowed to get into the business of knowledge production. After the 1988 Act they were replaced by the wholly funded and nominated National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the School Examination and Assessment Council (SEAC).

While the DES was in a position to axe the Schools' Council with impunity, other rival producers of educational knowledge proved harder to suppress. This is not to say that no efforts in this direction were made. Attacks on educationalists in higher education took the form of cuts in research funding, and a sustained intervention in the work which they undertake with and for teachers, in initial training and in the provision of advanced courses. Wide-scale changes were demanded in course structures for both B.Ed and PGCE students and a new process of accreditation was instituted under the direction of a newly established, government appointed body, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. The argument was that existing courses were too academic, and too detached from everyday school practice and the influence of practising teachers. College and university lecturers were suspected of having too little "recent and relevant" experience ; and thus, by implication, of being too concerned with abstract and often negative theorizing. In parallel, the DES made moves to transform the funding and organisation of in-service education and training resulted in an increase in short "delivery" type courses and a diminution in opportunities for teachers to participate in advanced academic study (see chapter 6).

These moves were part of a wider campaign of denigration and demotion conducted against the teaching profession as a whole. From 1976, the general tenor of official commentary on teachers became negative, tending to stress failure, incompetence, irresponsibility, low expectations and poor performance. Moves to reduce teacher autonomy in curriculum matters were often presented as a response to teacher intransigence. For teachers, this resulted in an alarming state of demoralisation and a lack of both public and self-esteem, a situation re-inforced by problems of pay and revised conditions of service. Add to this a conviction that the system itself was being starved of essential resources, and it is not surprising that problems of teacher recruitment and retention became steadily more serious.

The purpose of recounting this dire tale is to suggest that the teaching profession, from university department to nursery school staff room, became increasingly distanced from the chance of making authoritative contributions to the debate about education policy. The days of which Maurice Kogan could say that one of the glories of the British education system is that innovation has been practitioner-based (Kogan, 1979) seem to be long gone. Expertise and authority lie elsewhere in new knowledge-producing networks.

As we have seen, some of these networks operate within government. We have considered the role of HMI within the DES but room must be made to mention the

Further Education Unit, a semi-autonomous organisation within the DES which has had a considerable impact on content, style, pedagogy and modes of assessment in both schools and colleges. Another source of authoritative comment was the Department of Employment's Manpower Services Commission : the TVEI scheme which will be examined in Chapter 5 was not the only channel through which their ideas about both the content and pedagogy of upper secondary education were disseminated. We should also note the increasingly influential input of the Audit Commission on matters such as school management, school inspection and the future of LEAs.

### ***The Normative Base***

During the course of this analysis it has become increasingly difficult to sort out the power which accrues from an acknowledged position in the business of knowledge-production from that which is acquired as a result of receiving significant symbolic rewards. At a time when government is playing a commanding role in a particular sphere of activity, then it will have few rivals in its ability to hand out such rewards. Thus for individuals, or a group of individuals, to have the ear of government, to gain a public platform for their ideas, possibly through the good offices of a Conservative press, and visibly to influence the direction of public policy, clearly re-orders the existing balance of power. There is therefore a considerable over-lap with the comments in the previous section. Many of the groups to which reference will be made in the following paragraphs would see themselves as knowledge-producers in the sense that they have been in the business of building influential bodies of opinion as to how education should be organised. Their activities are noted here to illustrate the growing power of government to determine whose voice should be heard, whose views respected, and whose approval should be sought through the re-direction of policy.

Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State between 1986 and 1989, frequently complained that education had lost its way because it had become too "producer-dominated". This was entirely consistent with the Conservative government's promotion of a free-market ideology based on the operation of individual choice. Thus professional expertise in many spheres was seen to re-inforce a "nanny-state" where the preferences of the consumer had come to be dominated by those with a vested interest in maintaining control of the services within which they worked. Such views are more than adequate to explain the eclipse of professional educators in the status stakes. By the end of the eighties it was clear that even the voice of HMI, so crucial to government credibility only a few years before, was about to be silenced. On the one hand, they had become

too closely identified with the educational professionals; on the other, the legitimising task they had previously performed could now be done better by others.

Who then has taken their place among the blessed? On the one hand we might expect to find that high prestige was shifted to organised consumer opinion. This is partially true in that employers have gained a key place in educational debate. Employer organisations such as the Confederation of British Industry are prominent among those consulted about policy. Employers are well entrenched in the governing bodies of schools and colleges. The local Training and Education Committees which oversee vocational training are made up of local employers. And key positions (such as the current chairmanship of the National Curriculum Council) are given to people from industry. Consumer interest in the sense of parental views has not however attained the same status. The move towards greater parental influence within governing bodies reached full fruition under the terms of the Education Reform Act, and the operation of parental choice based on full information is accorded a key role in the cause of educational reform : but, as in many other areas of Conservative social policy, it is possible to argue that the parental voice is individualized, even atomized, in such a way that parents' views are felt as so many discrete pin-pricks rather than as a serious collective lobby. A few token organisations may have been 'consulted', but it is hard to identify a significant intervention.

Beyond the consumer voice there is the far more significant role of the 'think-tanks'. Reference has already been made to the Conservatives' search for the ideological "high ground" which was initiated in the Heath years. Through the years under review in this chapter, the contribution to educational debate made by the various groupings within this fermenting broth were numerous and, despite the discrepancies within their policy preferences, increasingly influential. The story is complex and well beyond the scope of this thesis (see Knight, 1990, for an exemplary account, and Lawton, 1992, for a useful summary ; also Salter and Tapper, 1985) but it is important to list some of the key groups. These would include Keith Joseph's Centre for Policy Studies; the Institute of Economic Affairs which has seen education as a key element in economic recovery; the Adam Smith Institute which has emphasised the need to expose education to consumer choice; and the Hillgate Group which wants to abandon all forms of government regulation over schooling and teacher training in order to allow the operation of the market to determine educational provision. Certain individuals have played a key role in producing the policy recommendations of these groups : the names of Cox, Sexton, Scruton, Letwin, Lawlor, and O'Hear are all significant, to name but a few.

If a single example could indicate the degree of influence exercised by these groups, it might be the final Black Paper, published in 1977 and edited by Rhodes Boyson in which we find what is virtually a blue-print for the Education Reform Act of 1988 (Cox and Boyson, 1977). But more significant than any individual contribution or group has been the overall impact of these interventions (which has been substantial enough to stimulate the creation of parallel left-wing groups such as the Institute for Public Policy Research). Together they have produced a situation in which coherent and sometimes persuasive position statements are produced and in many ways, they have inherited a role from which the traditional educational partners - the LEAs and their associations, the educationalists and their institutions, and the teachers and their associations - have been dispossessed.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The period reviewed in this chapter ends with the enactment of the Education Reform Act. Through this Act government acquired a huge range of new powers over the system, including the detailed specification of the curriculum. Although some have claimed that this was a rather late accretion to the government's intentions for educational reform, nevertheless it is possible to see in the history of the preceding decade and a half an almost inexorable line of development from a system marked by decentralisation and autonomy towards centralisation and control.

The conclusion to Chapter 2 described a situation in which the coercive powers of central government were relatively insignificant beside the collective influence of LEAs, examination boards and the full range of professional interest groups. By 1988 (and prior to the Act), this was substantially changed. The details of how that came about have been charted in this chapter.

Others have drawn attention to the contradictions within Conservative policy during the eighties caused by a tension between neo-liberal and neo-conservative tendencies (Dale, 1983; Quicke, 1988; Knight, 1990). However what has sustained the party's unity over this long period has been a shared commitment to the market which neo-liberals could welcome for its supposed capacity to deliver a freely achieved equilibrium, and neo-conservatives could support as an imposed discipline upon an unruly public sector. Within such an ideology it is inevitable that almost all questions can be resolved into issues concerning resources. Attempts to control the curriculum via exhortation having largely failed, the Reform Act marked the end of a search for voluntary compliance. But the enforcement process can itself be understood as a form

of contract. Government now specifies the "product mix" and "product quality" (Keep, 1992), and effectively contracts with schools, increasingly on an individual basis as grant-maintained status spreads, to supply what is demanded. Quality control is exerted both by the contractor and, indirectly, by the "client".

There is a case for suggesting that the key to the achievement of this new settlement lies in the transformation of the remunerative base, and, within this, in the development and use of contract and pseudo-contract, in order that policy formulation may lead directly and speedily to specific changes in practice. I therefore intend to focus on this approach to funding over the remainder of this study.

Such changes do not, of course, go uncontested. But where the only available means are so closely tied to specified ends, there is little room for disobedience at the point of delivery. Practice, if not opinion, inevitably becomes more standardised. Thus the notion of pluralism, which had proved an acceptable explanatory concept during the post-war years, has proved less and less useful to contemporary critique. An emphasis on consensus and accommodation has yielded to a focus on ideological conflict and to debates about contested values. And as in most situations of conflict, resources are a crucial commodity.



## Chapter Four

# DEVELOPING THE REMUNERATIVE BASE : CATEGORICAL FUNDING

### 4.1 Introduction

The last chapter concluded with the view that in the years between 1974 and 1987, central government became increasingly dissatisfied with influence as a means to secure curriculum changes in line with its evolving policies. In that process, the publication of The School Curriculum in 1981 (DES 1981), followed by two inconclusive Circulars urging compliance, signalled the end of an era. Thereafter, in the early years of the decade, government found new ways to expand and transform its grip on all the four elements of power identified in this argument, re-vitalising its coercive, remunerative, knowledge-generating, information-gathering and normative capacities.

However, with the return of a third Conservative administration in 1987, there came a rupture in this evolving story, as government decided to embark upon a programme of strenuous legislation. It seems certain that the Education Reform Act, which became law in July 1988, will stand with the Education Acts of 1902 and 1944 as one of the great turning points in twentieth century educational history. The Act introduced a massive programme concerned with the installation of a national curriculum underpinned by a national programme of testing; provision for schools to take over responsibility for managing most of their own financial affairs or even, if their parent body so voted, to opt out of local authority control altogether; the further development of the powers of lay governors and the enhancement of parental choice of school for their children. By these means the Act

*increased the powers of the Secretary of State for Education and Science .... restored to the central government powers over the curriculum which had been surrendered between the Wars, and set up formal machinery for exercising and enforcing these powers and responsibilities .... introduced important limitations on the functions of local education authorities who were forced to give greater autonomy to schools and governing bodies .... The change in the power structure extended to higher education .... Universities and polytechnics were brought more firmly under the control of the Secretary of State, through changes in their funding aimed at increasing accountability and making them more amenable to government direction ....*

*(Maclure, 1988, p.ix)*

The specific provisions of this comprehensive Act, and the motivations behind the government's decision to introduce it, are beyond the scope of this thesis. In many

ways the reassertion of legislative power - itself only one element within the co-ercive base - has now overtaken the more evolutionary development of the other power bases. Indeed, a careful exploration of that development provides such persuasive evidence of an increasingly effective capacity for greater control (through mechanisms relating to such matters as planning, financial regulation, accountability, the exploitation of information, and the control of teachers' training, pay and conditions), that one might well ask whether the Act was even necessary. There are, of course, broader reasons why the Conservative government may have chosen to mark its third term with a programme of radical social legislation, but again it is tempting to ask why it should have chosen such a high-profile, high-risk strategy in relation to education. In the light of the analysis in this study, it would seem that the answer must relate to an ideological commitment to a market economy characterised by consumer choice; and also to the shorter-term electoral imperative to define a social problem and then to pursue it with noise and demonstrable effect.

The second half of the thesis narrows its perspective to developments within the remunerative base, and in particular, to the adoption of categorical funding strategies for the promotion of specific curriculum-orientated policies. Despite the advent of the new Act, the use of such funding mechanisms appears to be persisting, although the promotion of policies by such relatively elaborate funding procedures takes on a rather different significance when those particular policies could or might be summarily installed through new statutory powers. However, the practice of categorical funding is still very much with us and it must therefore be assumed that it has some inherent advantages over other available strategies.

Subsequent chapters will, as already indicated, review its operation in relation to three specific areas. In those chapters the emphasis will be upon the actual application and impact of categorical funding and will draw upon the writer's personal involvement and investigations in each of these fields. The function of this chapter is rather different. I intend initially to develop an analytical account of the chief characteristics of categorical funding and the elements within it (Section 4.2); and then to chart the emergence of such strategies in the educational sector over the past two decades (4.3). I conclude with a more detailed reflection upon the model proposed as a prelude to the case studies that follow (4.4)

## **4.2 Categorical funding ; implementing policy via resource procedures**

To find a name for what is effectively a new style of funding is not easy. "Sponsored development" or "sponsored innovation" may be an adequate description but perhaps neither suggests the level of control exercised by the sponsor. "Specific grant" also narrows the focus. Various other names and terms are in use : "incentives for innovation" (Pincus 1973); "categorical programmes" (Knapp and Cooperstein, 1986); "categorical grants" or "matching grants" (Tsang and Levin, 1983); even "honeypot management" (Knight, 1987). I have elected to use the term "categorical funding", which derives from the various programmes for the disadvantaged funded through the 1965 ESEA Act in the USA (Atkin and House, 1981). I begin by listing the major characteristics of such strategies.

Categorical funding is, I suggest, used to facilitate a policy in situations where, under existing conditions, neither the policy makers nor their initiating agency have the statutory right or the means to implement desired changes without the co-operation of those who have both. They do however have the resources and they proceed to use the normal processes of contract to implement their policies.

For example, the TVEI scheme could not have been implemented by the MSC despite the initial willingness of its Chairman, David Young, to set up his own educational institutions if LEAs had not been willing to co-operate. Effectively TVEI could only be realised by LEAs acting through their schools and colleges.

In the eighties it was hard to find direct parallels for this type of funding policy in other areas of central government spending but then again it was also hard to find other areas of social policy in which the relatively undefined power relationships that existed between the DES and the LEAs could be paralleled. The closest might possibly have been in the area of health : the Department of Health had to deliver a health service through the intermediacy of Regional Health Authorities, and it seemed that there was only a relatively loose control over the way in which Regional Health Authorities used the resources allocated to them, even when they received extra funds to provide services which government had identified as priorities. But as we move into the world of the Citizen's Charter (Prime Minister, 1991), the language of purchaser and provider has come to dominate the entire field of social policy and public services to the point when it is realistic to talk about "government by contract" (Mather, 1991). These theme will be further explored in the final chapter.

The distinction between block grant and specific grant is well understood and routinely practised in the financial arrangements between central and local government. Specific grant is frequently made available to bidders who meet the criteria and make the appropriate promises. However categorical funding, as defined here, is a form of grant with a particularly tight set of strings. Only in the Department of Trade and Industry's selective financial assistance schemes (SFAs), where in the past support has been given in order to rescue and restructure ailing industries, can we find analogous characteristics of specificity and conditionality.

Policy implementation by means of categorical funding proceeds via a series of logical and sequential steps :

1. a policy is developed
2. funds, generous enough to attract those who can and may deliver, are made available (this is particularly potent when the potential recipients feel themselves starved of alternative resources)
3. voluntary co-operation is invited in exchange for a share of the resources
4. acceptance of the resources is equated with the acceptance of the policy - and also with the ability to deliver. (1)

This account of the process is equally applicable in all the three case studies which follow. In each, it will be argued that the rapid installation of the new policy is testimony to the effectiveness of the funding strategy.

Within the mechanisms of categorical funding, there are a number of integral elements : these I propose to name as criteria, bid, contract, monitoring, evaluation, and replication or impact. At this point there follows a brief account of each : later in the chapter each will be analyzed more fully.

1. Criteria - these specify benchmarks set out by the prospective donor to indicate to those who may wish to join the scheme what would be required of them. These criteria act as the explicit rules and they represent the parameters within which local diversity will be tolerated, even encouraged. There are often a further range of operational rules and assumptions which go beyond mere bureaucratic requirements. For example, in many projects there is a high profile on 'cost-effectiveness' though it may not be listed as such among the formal criteria.

2. Bid - the process by which the would-be recipient sets out his proposals. This is typically followed by a period of negotiation during which the original bid is brought as close as possible to the 'ideal' as set out in the criteria.

3. Contract - this represents the deal struck between the parties concerned. It forms the basis on which the recipient may proceed and the expectation is that any deviation not specifically allowed for (such as an agreement about the permitted scope for virement) will need to be re-negotiated.
4. Monitoring - normal patterns of accountability within contractual arrangements would indicate that the party providing the funds should be able to satisfy itself that the terms of the contract are being met, so a flow of information as to numbers, categories, and outcomes is typically asked for and provided. This extends to the certification of expenditure and the auditing of accounts.
5. Evaluation - categorical funding appears to require of evaluation two somewhat contradictory functions : first, a degree of independence so that special pleading and self-justification do not act as a smokescreen for a failure to deliver the agreed programme; and second, a focus on the processes of implementation rather than any form of fundamental critique concerning the underlying goals or strategies of the programme.
6. Replication/Impact - the funding promised is finite though it is often held out as a possibility that extensions on a similar or revised scale may materialise. Hence the stress on the quasi-experimental, pilot nature of many of the schemes funded in this manner, and the assumption that students or others within the programme form some sort of a 'research cohort'. The essential nature of many categorically funded schemes to date has been that funds are offered as seed money, and both monitoring and evaluation are largely geared to assessing and publicising the positive outcomes and their ripple effects through the expectant waters of the pond. There is, however, an alternative scenario where the distributed resources are not seen as a means to fund exemplary activities. Here there may be a more straightforward attempt to produce changes of attitude, priorities or practice in line with the funding agency's policy preferences. This may give rise to a much more extended use of categorical funding than is implied by the concept of seed money.

#### **4.3 The Advent of Categorical Funding**

Before looking in more detail at these various elements, I propose to review the practice of categorical funding within the education sector in order to indicate how this particular style of resource control has developed, putting the three specific cases to be examined into context.

By the late eighties the practice of categorical funding was well established in the DES. Yet it is important to remember that this was not simply a reversion to the use of specific grant, a strategy which *per se* had in the past brought little return to the department in terms of direct authority. It was, I suggest, the pioneering work of the MSC during the seventies and early eighties which demonstrated the effectiveness of specific grant tied to contract for securing tight and quick links between policy formulation and policy implementation.

Initially the MSC adopted such strategies in order to deliver its emergency programmes for the young unemployed : WEP, WEEP, YOP, CP and now their replacements, YTS and the new ETS (see glossary). To achieve this, the MSC signed contracts with employers, colleges, voluntary organisations and all manner of training agencies. Overlap with the work of the DES was inevitable as these short-term programmes began to involve the colleges of further education. The MSC has, of course, a wider responsibility for vocational training and re-training, and therefore a detailed concern with the provision of non-advanced further education (NAFE). By 1985 its concern was consolidated by a financial arrangement broadly reminiscent of categorical funding in its pure form. Under this arrangement, the MSC supplied 25% of the funding for NAFE, but in return gained the right to review and co-ordinate 100% of LEA provision - a neat example of the capacity of funding based upon contractual arrangements to secure influence over and beyond that for which it specifically pays (MSC, 1985a).

It was in November 1982, with the announcement of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, that the MSC moved directly into the school sector. From September 1983, the operation of this scheme provided the DES with a powerful example of the potency of categorical funding. The department itself began to take some tentative steps in this direction.

The department's Lower Attaining Pupils programme, funded by the Urban Aid programme, was introduced in 1982, and the DES itself funded some limited in-service grant schemes in 1983, 84 and 86 (see Chapters 3 and 6). As discussed in the previous chapter, the 1984 Education Act established the Education Support Grant scheme by giving the DES power to retain 0.5% of planned educational expenditure for this purpose, a figure later raised to 1%. This new figure seemed to be only a temporary staging-post : in the Green Paper Paying for Local Government (DoE, 1986) it was suggested that "there may be a case for some new grants, for example in the education field in support of the government's objective of raising standards at all levels of

ability". At least one reputable newspaper suggested a possible level of 10-15% (The Guardian, 22 January 1986). The implications for LEAs of such a shift in terms of both their financial independence and their capacity to pursue their own policies were huge (though subsequent legislation achieved the same ends by rather different means).

Better Schools announced new strategies for the in-service training of teachers, justifying the move with the statement that "the in-service training grant scheme of 1983-84 has succeeded in stimulating training in selected national priority areas " (DES, 1985a, para 174). One month later, an eighteen month programme of training, ostensibly related to TVEI, was announced by the MSC (MSC, April 1985); however, in various public and semi-public meetings, DES officials and HMI have made no secret of the fact that this scheme for "TVEI-related In-service Training" (TRIST) was intended as a dummy run for their own scheme which began in September 1987. The MSC employed its by now well-practised categorical funding strategy, though this time within indicative totals for each LEA; the DES then took over the same strategy with its successor and much larger scheme.

It is in the Education Reform Act itself that we find the clearest discussion of the government's intention to introduce contract funding into the higher education sector. This move was envisaged in the 1987 White Paper to which fuller reference will be made in Chapter 7. However the percentage of funds coming to the universities from the University Grants Committee's block grant had been declining since the early eighties, and universities had increasingly been obliged to sustain their income by seeking funds from a variety of other sources. Some of the shortfall was made up by securing industrial sponsorship, mainly for applied research; or by direct enterprise, through the establishment of trading companies and science parks. Both these activities have accustomed universities to the task of seeking funds and entering into contractual arrangements. Other funds have come from the more traditional source, the Research Councils. However, the development of greatest relevance to this study is the growing practice of making bids to the DES and other government departments for "special initiative" monies. Examples of such initiatives, which show all the marks of categorical funding, include the ETP, ALVEY, PICKUP and EHE programmes (see Chapter 7). Presumably the DES drew upon the experience of these projects in preparing their advice for the new Universities Funding Council on how to proceed with the process of contract funding envisaged in the new Act.

The purpose of this section has been to chronicle the onward march of categorical funding and to suggest that the DES has learned substantially about both its procedures

and its efficacy from the MSC. It would be interesting to speculate about the particular structural and organisational characteristics of the Commission, as compared with a government department, which prompted or permitted it to devise new approaches, new relationships, and a new versatility in responding to government policy aspirations within politically attractive time-scales. But the focus of this study is the operation of the funding strategy itself rather than its roots. I therefore propose to analyze the various elements within the strategy in greater detail in order to lay the ground more fully for the case studies.

#### **4.4 The Elements Explored**

##### ***Criteria***

The first and most obvious fact about the criteria attached to an offer of funding is that they represent the explicit policy ambitions of the donating body. Yet that statement must immediately be qualified in three ways.

In the first place, criteria represent the public and explicit agenda : they may well conceal a private and implicit agenda. For example, the explicit agenda may be the promotion of a specific innovation in schools or colleges : the implicit agenda may be to by-pass and thus weaken existing structures and constraints which may be perceived by government as unhelpful across a much broader range of issues than the particular innovation in question. Second, in drawing up criteria, donors have to strike a balance between the prime objective of policy implementation and the necessity of recruiting local support, for it must be remembered that part of the definition of categorical funding is that it is used in those situations where the funding body has neither the right nor the means to enforce compliance on the potential recipients. Put crudely, it is a bribe, and the price paid has to be satisfactory to both parties (always remembering that the recipient may be short of alternative sources of revenue). Third, and as an extension to the previous point, the donor invariably requires not only compliance but also initiative, enterprise, commitment, and even legitimation from those funded. In this we see exemplified Archer's 'resource dependency theory' (Archer 1981). For money is not the only resource within these relationships. Those who receive funds have both their professional expertise and their professional approval to bestow : to proceed without both would necessarily be a risky business for the donor. Criteria must therefore be drawn up in such a way as to offer scope for the recipients to attach their enthusiasm to the scheme, and to find space within it for the realisation of at least some of their own aspirations. Having said that, however, it is important to realise that



criteria need only to be broad enough to recruit a sufficient number. (Others will join the ranks as alternative options shrink, and as new resources identify new opportunities and/or new career routes.) It could not be said of any of the three cases to be studied that the programmes have initially enjoyed the support of more than a handful of potential contractees.

Criteria can, of course, be redrawn to suit a changing situation. Where categorical funding has become part of a yearly cycle, as in the case of INSET, there is an annual opportunity to re-order priorities. Equally, categorical funding can be used for a short-term programme, or for an indefinite period which has the effect of keeping the receivers "on their toes". Moreover, criteria are invariably embedded in procedural rules about such matters as how and when to apply, and these can be altered to shorten or lengthen the time-scales within which the programmes must be mounted.

One further point about criteria concerns their very nature. They do not specify precise targets : they are more in the nature of aims, principles, aspirations, or directions for development. They are thus, in a sense, beyond realisation. Those who accept categorical funding acknowledge, at least publicly, that they are on the road; they cannot expect total success, unqualified approval, and a gold star for a task completed. Thus the donor retains the possibility of critical comment.

### ***Bid***

In developing a bid, the would-be recipient must pay close attention to the conditions which the donor has defined as the base requirements for eligible programmes. If the criteria are the overall direction, then the conditions set out those elements which the donor considers should feature in the travel plans of the worthy traveller. Thus the invitation to bid sets out minimum requirements concerning such matters as participant numbers, the programme to be provided, assessment procedures, performance indicators, the use of resources, and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. There may also be an indication of more general principles that must be accommodated, such as equality of access or preferred pedagogies. Putting together a bid therefore involves a demonstration that the recipient will travel the road defined for him, and that his journey will be in accordance with the travel instructions issued to him. The creativity of the bid will reside in tailoring the one to the other, and in simultaneously finding scope for local priorities and initiative in the spaces that remain.

The issue of local priorities and initiatives takes us to the next point. One marked feature of the bidding process, common to many categorically funded schemes, is the short time-scale for preparing, and later modifying, the bid (submission is another commonly used term : a Freudian slip ?). Such pressure precludes genuine consultation, even among those whose work will be most directly affected by either success or failure in securing the funds. Within categorical funding, the bidding process therefore tends to reinforce hierarchy and managerial approaches, encouraging a situation in which those in authority make undertakings on behalf of their subordinates without due consultation. Those who prepare bids are frequently operating under great pressure to prepare the necessary documentation before the deadline, and frequently have to by-pass processes such as consultation which are known to favour successful implementation (Fullan, 1982). These pressures can be seen as part of an overall strategy to assert the power of the donor.

This brings us to the related question of the time-costs involved in the preparation of bids. Where potential recipients find themselves in a situation where they feel compelled to make a number of bids in different directions, the cost to them of the bidding process itself is not inconsiderable. There is evidence that this is a particular concern in higher education.

In making a bid, recipients are often confused as to whether they are bidding for additional funds, or whether the monies within the scheme are merely redirected from mainstream funding. There is often no simple answer to this question, for who is to say whether funds made available for a specific scheme might otherwise have found their way into the overall budget ? In some instances (LEATGS, for example), it appeared that diversion was the major factor, and so recipients find themselves having to ask for sections of their traditional income and then to receive it with new strings attached. This issue closely relates to the rather superficial argument sometimes heard that categorical funding is a way of reconciling central control with the virtues of local autonomy. On one level, recipients are free to choose whether or not to bid; and in some instances, for how much to bid. On another, however, and especially in a climate of expenditure cuts, this is a freedom which it would be difficult to exercise. Marie Antoinette's peasants were, of course, quite free to eat cake.

Arising from this point is another, possibly of greater importance. This is the implication that a successful bid equals a successful strategy. In other words, if the proposal is rewarded by funds, it is by definition a good one. Success is behaviour that earns a reward. Judgement is extrinsic to the enterprise itself. A further

implication is that it is possible to draw up blue-prints for good programmes in fairly detailed form before their inception, and that therefore conception is separate from, and prior to, execution. To the degree that this pre-determination deters adaptive behaviour, it is not consistent with the best educational practice. Research into the impact of Schools Council projects demonstrated the tensions between those who had developed a programme and saw it as having a significant degree of coherence; and those who used it in the classroom and saw it as their professional obligation to tailor the project to their pupils' needs and interests rather than defer to its conceptual purity. The parallels are obvious. When the bid is successful and the contract agreed, those who wrote it, and those who authorised it and then monitor its delivery, can feel dismayed by subsequent modifications and changes.

### ***Contract***

Thus we come to the contract itself. The agreement concluded between donor and recipient can appear in many forms and it must not be assumed that in each case a document is produced that would be accepted by a lawyer as a legally binding contract. However, at the very least, submissions are made, refined, re-written and developed into an acceptable form. Then a formal letter announcing the success of the bid is issued, though sometimes with further provisos about future developments or unresolved issues. If not contracts per se, we have at least contractual style agreements.

To reach this agreement, the parties concerned have often been through a process of negotiation, during which the recipient has come to know the intentions of the donor in a much more detailed fashion as the original bid is modified to match the criteria as closely as possible. Guesswork and anticipation both have a part to play as bidders endeavour to prove themselves acceptable. The power of the categorical funding process is significantly enlarged if some bids do not make it through to the contract stage. In some programmes we shall see evidence of the allocation of less money than had been applied for, and in others we shall see examples of bidders being sent away to try again in the following year's cycle. In yet other instances, we shall see the donor giving permission for a scheme to commence but with-holding the contract itself until certain remaining issues are resolved. This naturally provokes anxiety in the recipient who is concerned about the chance of being abandoned in mid-stream.

The notion that the contract itself may be torn up if the donor is not satisfied with performance is always on the margins of the agenda, though I can point to no parallel

examples of the recipient threatening to renounce the deal. (On Archer's thesis, this demonstrates the extreme imbalance of resources between the parties involved.)

Against these arguments about the significance of the bid-negotiation-contract process, it has been suggested that once the deal is signed, the donor loses some of his control over the recipient, and thus it may be in his interest to delay or to threaten cancellation (Fulton, 1987). Moreover, when funds are routinely allocated by this method, the regulatory function also diminishes as routine takes over. This may be particularly true in a very complex operation, such as the annual cycle for funding INSET. Against this, I would argue that the secret is to change the criteria and to revise the demands made upon recipients each year in sufficient degree to maintain uncertainty. However, the widespread adoption of categorical funding has not yet gone far enough for us to do more than speculate about the strength of these arguments.

It is worth pausing for a moment to reflect upon the relationships between those who enter into contracts. First of all, although in a long-term sense categorical funding implies mutual dependence because both parties have goods to bestow which are of vital importance to each other, at the practical level this mutuality is less apparent ; because the most obvious and immediate element in the relationship is the transmission of resources, the reality on the ground is that the recipient becomes the licensed agent of the donor (Harland, 1987a). The recipient is free, indeed has been set up, to exercise his initiative in the pursuit of the donor's policy objectives and he may well have adopted those objectives for his own. But he does this within specified bounds, rather as the encyclopaedia salesman is encouraged to be enterprising in his efforts on behalf of his employer, but always operating within the streets and using the credit arrangements authorized by the company. Thus the salesman, and the beneficiaries of categorical funding, become the extension in the field of the will at the centre. Policy intentions are translated into policy implementation through their agency.

### ***Monitoring***

If I sign a contract with a builder for the construction of a house, he will expect me to monitor its progress, sending round my surveyor to check that the building incorporates all the features that were in the specifications. Such are the implications of contract, and they expose the lack of mutuality, at least at the operational level.

Monitoring in the post-contract period is of central importance in categorical funding relationships. At the superficial level, we can relate this to the reservations expressed

by Fulton (1987) concerning the donor's potential loss of control once the contract is concluded. One potent way to remind the recipient of his continuing obligations is to sustain a high level of demand for information and statistical returns, more or less loosely tied to pre-specified performance indicators. Most projects experience close financial auditing. Fulton suggests that there is often a disproportionate emphasis on financial as opposed to educational accountability and this can be explained in a number of ways. First, in the short and medium term there is an "absence of comprehensive or reliable output indicators" which forces a focus on inputs, of which finance is the most accessible. And second, "financial auditing provides the most credible leverage for the monitoring agency" (Fulton, 1987, pp 220-21).

Some elements in the monitoring programme can from time to time appear to be not much more than "busy-work", a reminder that the funding agency is watching. Be that as it may, the MSC, as progenitor of the current strategies, has achieved a measure of detailed oversight over its schemes which is remarkable. Through a network of regional advisers, Area Manpower Boards, auditors, officials, information gatherers and evaluators, its schemes are "known" to their sponsor to a quite extraordinary degree. Clearly there are echoes here of the concept of 'surveillance' as delineated by Foucault. In Discipline and Punish, he writes of a system of control (discipline) which is based on observation and close knowledge of what is going on :

*The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible.*  
(Foucault, 1979)

This strategy is reinforced in two ways. In the first place, by shifting attention to compliance with contract, the surveillance tends to assume the flavour of neutral, technical monitoring of a freely negotiated obligation and thus avoids at many points the implication of judging educational worth. In the second place, it must be remembered that this discipline/control strategy is located within a discourse about desirable educational and/or vocational aims and choices and about appropriate pedagogies to which the MSC itself has made a very considerable contribution. This pervasive discourse thus sustains a series of value assumptions which relate to the programme, while precluding the need to assert and defend them in the context of programme monitoring.

I shall return in the following chapters to the effect of the new discourses concerning both process and product within those schemes which have been the most conspicuous

objects of categorical funding; but here I wish to note the extent to which 'new-speak' or 'insider-speak' has the power to penetrate and permeate many schemes in schools, colleges, education authorities and, increasingly, higher education. The effect of this is to create agents acting for the sponsor among scheme participants themselves, even at moments of disenchantment. Recipients tend to internalise the language and expectations of the programmes upon which they have come to depend, to anticipate the response of the funding agency to any development, and thereby to discipline themselves. Foucault again, writing of the ideal institution for surveillance, Bentham's Panopticon, says

*.... so to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary ...* (op cit, p201)

Thus, I would argue that the relations of dependency encouraged by categorical funding, lead to a highly potent form of self-monitoring which supplements that imposed by the donor. Against that, some would claim that they have been able to exploit the new resources to their own ends. "Take the money and run" is a fashionable phrase. It is, in my view, just as probable that such people do not realise the extent to which they have been co-opted, or even manipulated.

In the chapters which follow, there will be opportunities to show how the processes of categorical funding (and in particular, bidding and monitoring) create situations in which contractees are routinely obliged to operate within the language and value system of the programme concerned. Moreover, we should not under-estimate the satisfactions of being an insider rather than a long-term outsider. It was Weber who said

*On the whole, people have a marked tendency to adapt themselves mentally to success, or to what at a particular time holds out the prospect of it, not only, as goes without saying, in regards to the means with which or the extent to which they seek to realise their ultimate ideals at that time, but in their abandonment of these ideals themselves. In Germany, it is thought proper to dignify this attitude with the name of Realpolitik.*

*(Weber, 1978, p89)*

## **Evaluation**

In defining the elements of categorical funding earlier in this chapter, it has already been suggested that evaluation in this context has two, somewhat opposed, aspects. In the first place, the funding agency often demands some "independent" evaluation. Indeed, the advent of such strategies has been remarkable for the extent to which mandatory provision has been made for both macro- and micro-evaluation by "experts". It seems likely that this demand for an external voice has something to do with the need to monitor : in other words, it adds to the overall impression that the truth of the scheme cannot be hidden from the funding agency's all-seeing eye. It also has the obvious function of not encouraging self-evaluation of a kind which, quite understandably, differs little from self-justification.

The second aspect seems, however, to be the more significant. This is that evaluation is essentially about facilitating the implementation of the programme's objectives by identifying points of un-ease or malfunction. Thus the evaluator is frequently tempted into the role of management or curriculum consultant and moves even further away from the possibility of developing any form of critique concerning the rationale or even the legitimacy of the whole enterprise. The term "formative" has often been claimed by those involved. Yet if this is justifiable in relation to the behaviour and performance of those who receive the funding, it does not appear to have much meaning at the macro-level. To claim that evaluation is genuinely formative must surely imply that even the initial conception of the programme is open to modification and revision. Yet evidence exists that decisions are made about the future development of schemes (for example, the massive extension of TVEI ; and also the decision to re-shape the LEATGS scheme by combining it with the ESG programme) long before evaluation findings are available. Genuine criticism of the policy thrust behind these schemes has to find expression elsewhere.

Evaluation thus becomes a tool of management and finds difficulty in escaping the technocratic imperatives of the system. As Apple says "evaluators are 'experts for hire'" and these experts are "quite strongly influenced by the dominant values of the collectivity to which they belong and the social situation within that society which they fill". He goes on to say

*One of the tasks of the expert is to furnish the administrative leader of an institution with the special knowledge these persons require before decisions are made. The bureaucratic institution furnishes the problems to be investigated, not the expert. Since the expert bears no direct responsibility for the final outcome of a programme, his or her activities*

*can be guided by the practical interests of the administrative leaders ....  
And what administrators are not looking for are new hypotheses or new  
interpretations that are not immediately or noticeably relevant to the  
practical problems at hand.*

*(Apple, 1979, pp147-8)*

In the case studies it will be apparent that there is considerable variation in evaluation practice, not least in assumptions about who should be involved - outside experts (often from higher education), clients, practitioners. Among them we shall encounter a mix of those with experience of evaluation and those with none. Among the former are notable examples of experienced evaluators who would wish to declare their resistance to the kind of co-option Apple describes, preferring instead to see their work as reflecting the interests of all concerned, attempting to equalise power and thus lessen bureaucratic and technocratic control over the grass-roots practitioner. My argument will be that, although the superficial characteristics of such "democratic" practice may be in evidence, all evaluation within categorical funding is necessarily trapped within an agenda expressed in the criteria and encapsulated within the contract. Most work done derives directly from aspects of the scheme specified in those two sources. Independence resides almost solely in the rhetoric. (2)

### ***Replication/Impact***

It is not possible to make a neat distinction between these two terms except in so far as replication implies that programmes will result in an expansion of activity beyond the scope of the funding, whereas impact implies that practice will be significantly affected, probably altered, by the experience of the programme.

Replication evokes the metaphor of a ripple in the pond. A key feature of MSC strategy has been the capacity to purchase an inordinate amount of influence for a limited outlay of funds. Take three examples : some LEAs have funded TVEI developments themselves beyond the bounds of their pilot schemes; the MSC itself secured 100% oversight of NAFE programmes for 25% of the money; and for a small injection of cash into the Enterprise in Higher Education scheme - £1 million over five years - the MSC has sought to influence the education of all first degree students within sponsored institutions, while simultaneously involving employers in the assessment of those students. Thus categorical funding schemes aim to extract the maximum "bang for the buck".

This effect is directly acknowledged by those categorically funded programmes which use the term "pilot scheme" (for example, the Lower Attaining Pupils scheme, and DES-sponsored experiments with Records of Achievement and Teacher Appraisal schemes). Such schemes allow government to assert the legitimacy of policy on the



basis of expertise, and in particular, experimentation. Thus pilot programmes take on the nature of "scientific" investigations : "the only problems are technical problems and the development of the social system must take on the logic of scientific progress" (Wilby, 1979). Recent "pilots" have been far from open-ended experiments. We have already noted the extension of TVEI ahead of conclusive evaluation; and in the others mentioned above, the only issues open to question appear to have related to implementation, the zero option being simply not available. However, the very existence of pilots enables government to claim a deference to the lessons of trial and error, and to the "expertise" thus generated. Habermas (1975) claimed that the search for technically-expert solutions allows more and more social questions to be taken out of the realm of public debate and Weiler (1983) suggests that one virtue of experimentation is that it suspends conflict by "seemingly constructive temporizing". Either way, piloting appears to diminish the scope for arguments based on value and principle by demonstrating that policy emerges from rational enquiry and objective fact. Such strategies have played their part in the replication of categorically funded projects: government has involved the teachers, the researchers, the academics, and the industrialists in pilot schemes, and shown its commitment to cautious reform. So it appears that reason, rather than political ideology, dictates that the programmes should be extended.

One other form of replication concerns the distribution of funds. There is evidence that LEAs themselves are choosing to invite schools to bid for inclusion in particular developments, and even that within an institution, heads or principals may use the same approach in allocating resources to departments or other sub-units (Knight, 1987). Even if these practices do not proceed from any particularly nice calculation of the potency of categorical funding, it is interesting to see the strategy replicating itself.

Before leaving this section, we must look more directly at the associated notion of "impact". By this I refer to change that occurs as a direct result of the programme. This may be at the level of course organisation, content, or pedagogy. It may be change by substitution of something new for something old, or at least by a shift in emphasis. Most fundamentally, it may be a shift in priorities, in overall system values. Thus, people will change what they do, how they do it, and what they think about what they do. They may also change the way they think about the sources of system change itself. New people will emerge in managerial and leadership roles, because they are identified with the area of activity promoted by the programme, with the re-ordered priorities, and with the whole process of contracted change. The case studies will identify impact in each of these guises.

## 4.5 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I propose to refer to a paper by Knight (1987), one of the very few authors to identify the potency of what he chooses to call "honey-pot management", because the name "catches the image of wafting honey-pot odours stirring the slumbering bears into salivated activity" ! Knight stresses the practical advantages and disadvantages of honey-pot management and thus he provides a more pragmatic account of categorical funding than that presented in this chapter. However such an account is wholly legitimate because, after all, it is likely that the MSC, the DES and others employ categorical funding for predominantly practical reasons : the hidden agenda may not even be apparent to those who choose a strategy for apparently "common-sense" reasons.

Knight claims that donors aim for "maximum effectiveness and minimum hassle". Choice of funding strategy is determined by considerations of equity, predictability, simplicity, value for money, and effectiveness (op cit, p.206). On these criteria, honey-pot management has considerable merits :

1. it concentrates the minds of both parties
2. it targets the donor's priorities
3. it encourages innovation
4. it speeds up the implementation of policy
5. it enables the donor to direct and implement policy without requiring a full line-management structure
6. it allows scope for local initiative
7. it can "trickle from one level to another"

On the other hand, its demerits are that :

1. it is not well-suited to permanent on-going policies
2. it is haunted by the problem of opportunity costs
3. it can create unrealistic conditions (such as to encourage profligate spending)
4. it can create or increase inequalities
5. it can be time-consuming
6. it can create disillusion and lower morale at the lower level
7. it is difficult to monitor and requires skilled evaluators.

(adapted from Knight, op.cit., pp 209-10)

It has been my intention in this chapter to go somewhat beyond the straightforward pros and cons approach exemplified in Knight's argument, useful though it is. The practical working out of categorically funded schemes will feature strongly in the three chapters which follow, but throughout I argue that it is important to consider the underlying meaning and significance of the relationships implied by contractual arrangements of this kind and to explore what they may tell us about the distribution of power in relation to the curriculum. This chapter has endeavoured to prepare the ground for that attempt.

#### Foot-notes

1. I first produced this analysis and much of what follows in the remainder of the section in Harland (1985). It subsequently appeared in slightly modified forms in further publications (for example in 1986, 1987a and 1987b).
2. It is significant that the award of contracts for much evaluation and research is itself a microcosm of the categorical funding process. Invitations to tender, specifying the matters to be investigated and often the preferred methodology, are issued to likely contractees by the funding body. There then follows a process of competitive bidding and the eventual award of a contract. Representatives of the funding agency sit on the steering committee to monitor the evaluation and will themselves ultimately evaluate the evaluation.

## Chapter Five

# THE CASE OF TVEI

## 5.1 Introduction

Much of the story of the Technical and Vocational Initiative will emerge from the analysis which fills most of this chapter. The section on criteria deals with the launch of the programme and the subsequent sections deal progressively with its installation and expansion. Within five years all LEAs in England, Scotland and Wales were involved and the scheme had been "extended" to 1995, providing a continuation of funding, the inclusion of all schools and colleges and the apparent involvement of the whole 14-16 age group. Spin-off activities spread to the initial and in-service training of teachers (see Chapter 6), and even to higher education (see Chapter 7). Total expenditure to 1995 was estimated at £900 million. (1)

The advent of TVEI spawned an enormous amount of commentary, much of it - as will be seen later in this chapter - emanating from the evaluation and promotional writing sponsored by the MSC itself. The scale of the scheme alone might account for this interest, for TVEI represents the biggest single episode of curriculum development undertaken in this country, challenging and surpassing in almost every way anything undertaken by the Schools Council. (Holt (1987) points out that in the second year of the TVEI pilot, the expenditure of £27 million exceeded the total ever spent on the Council). Furthermore, the style and strategy of the TVEI sponsors reversed almost all previous practices in the history of curriculum policy-making and implementation, and indeed the programme very often appeared to be successful in opposition to much of the conventional wisdom about curriculum change. However, TVEI was never a specific programme tightly defined by its sponsors and it took widely different forms in each of the 100+ pilot projects. Thus even when based on detailed empirical and quantitative evidence, a great deal of the commentary has been descriptive. The result has been that almost any argument about TVEI can be sustained on the basis of one instance or another, one descriptive account or another.

One of the most acute critics of TVEI, Roger Dale, has argued that

*What is needed ... is some progress towards conceptualising TVEI more adequately. One step towards this is the development of sensitizing concepts which present the possibility of going beyond the mere aggregation of descriptive accounts of different schemes based on different and frequently tacit purposes, methods and theories. Such concepts would be ... a medium for the possible grounding of theory.*  
(Dale, 1989b, p72)

The arguments presented in this chapter, and indeed in this thesis, are an attempt to do this, at least for those parts of the task which relate to the strategies of programme implementation.

Just before this task begins, however, it is worth including two comments in support of my argument about the significance of categorical funding, both from people who have studied TVEI in some depth. The first is from Iam Jamieson who, although he has doubts which I shall examine later about the potency of the contract itself, has written

*Categorical funding, the bidding system, the Don Corleone model of curriculum development - call it what you will, it has had a profound effect on the whole education system, and of course it was pioneered by TVEI.*

*(Jamieson, 1990, p131)*

The second comment is from Moon and Richardson who write from the broader perspective of a concern for public administration in general; they say of the whole TVEI programme with its distinctive funding strategy

*The success of this experiment (so far) may not have gone unnoticed in the rest of Whitehall*

*(Moon and Richardson, 1984, p33)*

## 5.2 Criteria

When David Young wrote to all LEAs in England and Wales on 28 January 1983 inviting them to submit bids for inclusion in a ten authority initiative, no indication was given that there would be further opportunities to join the scheme in later years. Young's letter stated that the MSC had set out five principles for its conduct of the experimental programme; he also said that a National Steering Group (NSG), hurriedly established in the weeks after the Prime Minister's announcement of TVEI on November 12th to provide for *post hoc* consultation with the affected (and predominantly antagonistic) interest groups, had "now produced ... a statement of aims for the scheme" together with "a set of criteria and supporting guidelines for the use of LEAs in submitting project proposals". These principles, aims, criteria and guidelines are, for the purpose of this discussion, all subsumed within the overall term "criteria". In effect, they form the explicit rationale on which proposals were to be based and agreements reached; and even though it will become clear that there have been additional requirements and shifts of emphasis over the years, these criteria have remained nailed to the official mast.

In the weeks between November 12th and January 28th, there had been some uncertainty as to what precise criteria should shape the new scheme - in other words what precisely it was about. The Prime Minister's announcement was couched in terms of up-grading "technical and vocational education for young people" and she claimed that this was in response to "growing concern about existing arrangements, expressed over many years, not least by the National Economic Development Council". She referred to "new institutional arrangements ... within existing financial resources ... where possible in association with local authorities" (Hansard, 1982, vol 31, col 271-2). Thus the focus was upon education and training deficits as perceived by the employer : little was said about involving and thereby re-directing the system itself and nothing was said about which young people were to be the target of the scheme which she had "invited" the Chairman of the MSC to initiate.

Both questions were the object of conflicting comment and statements over the next few weeks. It appeared that David Young (TES 19.11.82 - reports of press conferences), Norman Tebbit and even Keith Joseph were prepared to contemplate the creation of a new type of institution outside the control of the LEAs. The Association of County Councils (ACC), among many others, was as much alarmed by this suggestion as it was were affronted by the sudden announcement of an educational programme which was to be outside the control of the DES and its partners (see report of their representatives, 18.11.82, quoted in Worgan, 1987). More surprisingly, there seems to have been considerable uncertainty as to the target group for TVEI. David Young appeared to have his sights on what might be called the 'technical' stream, giving rise to anxieties that TVEI might re-create a tri-partite approach to secondary education (see for example Holt, 1987, and Chitty, 1986). On Christmas Eve, 1982, Education quoted Young as saying that the scheme was not intended for "pupils who were taking good O and A levels. They are not going to join the scheme. My concern is for those who are bright and able and haven't been attracted by academic subjects". Three years later, on becoming Secretary of State for Employment, he still retained this view : 15% of pupils were, he said, destined for higher education, the next 30-35% for "for TVEI and courses which could provide a mixture of vocational and academic qualifications and skills", and the remaining 50% would be joining the Youth Training Scheme (Times newspaper, 4.9.85). But meanwhile Keith Joseph appeared to link TVEI with his concern for the "bottom 40%"; while John Woolhouse, the first director of the MSC's TVEI Unit, was consistently anxious to see TVEI attract the ablest students to technical and applied subjects and the world of commerce and industry, and thereby wean them away from the non-instrumental learning of the old liberal-humanist tradition.

The MSC's five "principles" appeared to concede that the Commission should "set itself the objective of working through local education authorities" but they contain no reference to the ability range. However, by the time the NSG was functioning, one must assume that the education interest was at very least insisting on clarity in this regard, for the Aims begin with the oft-quoted phrase

*In conjunction with LEAs to explore and test ways of organising and managing the education of 14-18 year old young people across the ability range .... though the balance between what is offered for different ability levels is expected to vary between projects.*

*(MSC, TVEI Operating Manual, 1984)*

Looking more closely at the criteria, it is worth recalling Dale's (1989b) comment that the MSC's previous experience of programmes for the young unemployed certainly "coloured" TVEI. He identifies the key features of their approach as being : that Britain should be moving towards a more comprehensive system of education and training for the whole 14-18 age range; that successful "vocational preparation" programmes should provide opportunities for work experience and for the development of "social and life skills" of the kind which promote positive attitudes to work and to training; that an appropriate pedagogy for this type of work was rooted in the work of the FEU as exemplified in A Basis for Choice (1979) and a range of other publications concerned with vocational preparation, profiling and so forth; and that an increased emphasis on practical, "relevant" work would have a highly beneficial influence on student motivation. To Dale's list I would add that important lessons could be learned from the MSC's own programmes about the means of securing programme delivery through a process of short term, renewable (or not), contracts.

The fruits of this experience come through particularly clearly in the NSG Aims where they are re-inforced by comments on the speed of implementation, on cost effectiveness, on replicability (ie. the possibility that pilot schemes would have an influence beyond their immediate boundaries), on fit with other forms of skill and vocational training, and finally, on the need for evaluation and monitoring.

It is to be assumed that the NSG made their largest contribution to the exercise after the Aims were published in January 1983 and the focus had shifted to specifying the characteristics of satisfactory bids, notably through the Criteria and the Guidelines for the use of LEAs in submitting project proposals (MSC, September 1983). Although NSG membership was dominated by representatives of industry, the matters included in the Criteria and the Guidelines were designed to create a favourable impression among LEA personnel, school teachers and college lecturers. Thus we

find references to equal opportunities and the problem of sex-stereotyping, to progression, and to the balance to be achieved between general and technical/vocational education. There is also mention of regular assessment, with reporting to students and their parents, and the provision of "good careers and educational counselling". Students were to be prepared for "nationally recognised qualifications" and there was to be a "record of achievement describing qualifications gained and recording significant elements and attainments which are not readily deducible from the qualifications eg work experience and personal successes". Further details are given about the required institutional arrangements : clearly defined responsibilities, identified objectives, recruitment of students and size of cohort; no recourse to re-organisations necessitating Section 12 proposals; and the need for careful specification of "appropriate resources for the effective delivery of the programme".

Each pilot was also required to establish a local support group "bringing together ... the interests most directly concerned, viz the LEA, local industry and commerce, teachers and lecturers, and, where possible, parents and interested voluntary bodies". The Operating Manual makes it quite clear that an MSC nominee is to be an ex-officio member of the support group ; this nominee is to receive all papers and notice is given that those seen as important will be forwarded to the TVEI Unit. The same requirement would also applied to any sub-group which might be established (MSC, 1984, section 4), thus pre-empting any attempt to side-line significant decision-making into more private settings.

In each year of the pilot, LEAs aspiring to join were asked to respond with proposals based on these criteria, giving details about exactly how they would meet their obligations. Those officers, advisers and others responsible for writing the proposals would find themselves imbibing and digesting the criteria and second-guessing their precise meaning, partly by looking over their shoulders at LEAs who had succeeded in earlier rounds and partly by responding to hints from the MSC as to shifts in emphasis and emerging priorities. Most proposals are remarkable for the extent to which they play back to the MSC its own values expressed in its own jargon.

Authorities learned however that if these were the official criteria, there were others which were also influential. An important clue to a successful bid was, for example, to be found in David Young's initial letter of 28 January 1983 to LEAs : the penultimate paragraph contained references to learning skills, an aspect of the scheme which remained a high priority for the TVEI Unit. He wrote



*we are in the business of helping students to "learn how to learn" ....  
What is important about this initiative is that youngsters should  
receive an education which will enable them to adapt to the changing  
occupational environment.*

Two further examples of implicit or unofficial criteria will serve to illustrate this argument. The first relates to what Gaynor Cohen, a senior member of the Unit's staff with responsibility for evaluation, refers to as "a central theme" concerned with the "management of change" : she writes "one criterion of TVEI has always been management through consortia of schools and colleges" (Cohen, 1989). This appears to have been one of the characteristics which the MSC applauded in some schemes and encouraged others to write into their proposals, and Cohen may well be correct in suggesting that collaboration with other institutions helps to remedy the isolation (and even compensate for the managerial inadequacy) of many heads; but the published criteria go no further than suggest that consortia arrangements may help to achieve "a significant widening of the curriculum and of technical and vocational curriculum options".

A second, similarly unwritten, requirement which became increasingly significant concerns the 16+ phase where, as a kind of gloss on the thinking within the original criteria, the TVEI Unit came to expect considerable emphasis to be given to what they termed the "entitlement curriculum". This concept implies that post-16 students should be offered more than a specialised academic or vocational course. Hence both core and enrichment studies, work experience, guidance and counselling, and opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities should all have a place in the educational programme offered to students. Such an emphasis closely reflected the priorities of Anne Jones, Director of Educational Programmes at the MSC from 1987 and previously a comprehensive school head actively engaged in the debate about sixth form curricula, and in particular the proper relationship between the academic and the vocational, and between school and work (see, for example, Jones, 1983). It also pre-figured debate about the widening of post-16 studies, revived by Kenneth Baker in a speech to FE principals (Baker, 1989), and more generally by the rejection of the Higginson proposals on the future of A-levels, the advent of the AS-level, and the demand for core skills.

To conclude, the role of criteria within the TVEI scheme as out-lined in these pages demonstrates certain key characteristics which we may well find can be generalised across other examples of categorical funding. It is therefore worth setting them out at this stage :

1. criteria usually follow rather than precede the formulation of policy and the decision to put money behind it (ie to turn a policy into a programme). They may emerge only after a period of divergent thinking about just what the programme can and should achieve.

2. consultation with 'interested' parties about the criteria may replace consultation about the programme itself : thus conflict and disagreement are concentrated around the How? question rather than the Why? or Whether? questions. (This is often a characteristic of policy options explored through experimentation : see Weiler, 1983, and Harland, 1988.)

3. the values of the sponsoring body will usually dominate the process of formulating criteria, especially where the consultative group which endorses the final statement is made up of people representing different interest groups and whose task is therefore frequently that of defending their corner. Nevertheless, the period of formulation can be seen as a brief window of flexibility and therefore a moment when many of those affected can join the debate. This in itself can serve to legitimise the whole enterprise.

4. once written, criteria take on some of the characteristics of received truth. This does not necessarily apply where criteria are changed or up-dated on an annual cycle; but what certainly happens is that those with executive power to interpret what does or does not meet the sponsors expectations can exert considerable influence in relation to how they advise, prioritise and interpret the criteria with which they have been instructed to operate. Their own preferences inevitably play some part in this process. Where the context changes but the criteria stand (as broadly speaking has been the case with the TVEI pilot), they positively need to show an ability to adapt to new situations and to shift their interpretation of the criteria and their relative importance.

5. criteria attached to an offer of funding are a powerful tool in shaping values within the client group (and thus remunerative power shades over into the power to shape and re-shape values, ie, normative power). This may be because people do indeed change their thinking in line with the overall approach of an activity with which they become identified. Or it may be that a given opportunity draws to it and into the limelight those individuals whose values are at least adjacent to those which are being promoted. Meanwhile those who cannot or will not subscribe to the criteria retire to sulk in their tents.

### 5.3 Bid

If politicians, MSC officials and, to a lesser degree, the delegated representatives of interest groups made their appearance in the last section, this is the point at which we encounter LEA members, officers, advisers and teachers. And at the outset it is worth saying, in Dale's words,

*being acquainted with the origins and framework of the project does not necessarily tell us a great deal about how it works ..... practically every study ever published of an educational or curriculum innovation concludes that the form it actually takes is different from what was intended, that the process of implementation itself alters the shape and emphasis of the project...*

*(Dale, 1989a, p156)*

Nevertheless, the process of developing the bid - the who?, why? and when? of the process - undoubtedly defines the parameters within which future development and even divergence can take place. In Chapter 4 it was argued that the artistry required in the formulation of a successful bid lies in marrying the requirements of the scheme as laid down in the criteria to local priorities in such a way that a synthesis is achieved which both sides can accept. The first steps taken determine the spaces available later.

The bidding timetable for the start of TVEI began with David Young's letter to LEAs in November 1982 in which he said that he hoped to select ten pilot authorities by the end of January. In the event, the formal invitation to bid "by noon on March 4th" was made in the letter of 28 January 1983 to which reference has already been made. By the end of the month no fewer than 60 authorities had indicated that they planned to make a submission. By the due time, 66 proposals for 70 schemes had been submitted, a number delivered by hand in the closing minutes before the deadline. Most but not all of the submissions were from Conservative controlled LEAs: of the 14 finally chosen, only 5 were from Labour authorities. The successful proposals were then discussed in fine detail with the TVEI Unit before contracts were signed. Three months after the first 14 pilots were chosen, and three months before their schemes were launched, the government announced that "the experiment would be extended to allow 40 more LEAs to join in September 1984", though at a significantly lower level of funding than in the first round. Letters of invitation were issued on 23 September 1983 and proposals were requested by 12 December. Some, but not all, the submissions came in from LEAs who had been continuing their planning since the announcement of the first round and who had sought guidance as to how their initial proposal needed to be modified to gain approval. This time round,

46 LEAs joined the scheme. Scottish authorities, excluded from the first round, were now invited to join but they received less notice : their invitation was dated 27 January 1984 and proposals were required by March 5.

In October 1984, a further invitation was extended which promised that all LEAs choosing to bid would receive funding from September 1985. Beyond that date, only a few recalcitrant Labour authorities, including the ILEA, held out ; and they, by this time desperate for cash and their fears somewhat alleviated by the experiences of other LEAs, were brought in via a shortened pilot phase in 1986. By this time the decision to extend TVEI to all upper secondary pupils in all authorities was already in place; fresh criteria for the Extension phase were formulated and the whole process of bid, negotiation and so forth was beginning again.

This account of the expansion of the scheme suggests that almost all LEAs were anxious to join in, with the disappointed at each stage consulting the MSC - and each other - about what changes would result in 'success'. This is not to deny the existence of powerful negative feelings in most LEAs about aspects of the scheme. Some thought that TVEI threatened to be a divisive influence in comprehensive schools and would result in a narrowing of the curriculum for at least some students. Furthermore, some LEAs were prepared to resist the intrusion of the MSC into the school curriculum and into mainstream educational spending. However, money was a powerful enough incentive to overcome most opposition. The Prime Minister had made it clear that the TVEI money came out of the overall education budget and some LEAs saw themselves as applying "for their own money". One or two did see the value of involvement in the interests of influencing the way the scheme developed, while others had a natural pre-disposition towards being associated with experiment and innovation. Also, as Dale says (1989a, p158), for most authorities "TVEI money provided solutions to other problems in addition to that of changing the provision of technical and vocational education according to a specified set of guidelines". But it cannot be over-emphasised that, in a period of rate-capping and dwindling resources, money was the over-riding inducement.

Dale (1989a, p157) suggests that in the preparation of bids, three rather different approaches can be distinguished, each with different consequences for the eventual shape of an LEA pilot. In the first of these, overall responsibility was given to the authority's senior officer with responsibility for FE because this was the previous point of contact between the LEA, the MSC and, coincidentally, with the FEU and thus with the pedagogical style which the TVEI Unit appeared to favour. A second

model was to devolve responsibility for preparing a proposal to a consortium, or to competing consortia, of heads in the authority. A third was for the authority to select the schools to take part in the pilot and then to work out a proposal in collaboration with them. This taxonomy accords with evidence available except that it does not appear to give sufficient space to the LEA's own specialist advisory staff : inspectors/advisers in key areas such as CDT and/or Business Studies seem to have played an important role in a number of authorities. In others, LEAs clearly sought "volunteers" among their schools (colleges, being thinner on the ground, had less option about their involvement) : for the most part a response came from the heads with little or no consultation (often for lack of time) with colleagues, and it can safely be argued that their motives for taking part closely mirrored those of their own LEAs..

Where the LEA itself selected the schools, different criteria might apply :

*Some TVEI schools have been included because they have demonstrated that they could make it (TVEI) work, others because they are thought to need a new challenge. In some cases it has been used to equalise provision across the authority by bringing extra resources to the worst-off schools, in others it has been used to smooth school amalgamation. In yet others, TVEI resources have gone to the schools in the areas of the most powerful councillors.*

*(Dale, op cit, p158)*

An interesting question in relation to the process of formulating a bid relates to the extent to which the LEA was able, willing or even required to consult widely within the authority before the proposal was submitted. For the most part it would seem that the pattern at LEA level mirrored that at the national level : in other words, for most people, including both teachers and local employers, the opportunity to join in the consultation process was a post hoc exercise. Proposals were typically written at speed by a group of three or four people. What is more, for at least the first two rounds, LEAs were clearly in direct competition with each other for a limited, even if generous, amount of funding. One applicant's success was another's failure. Moon and Richardson confirm this scenario:

*.... it would appear that the conventional local consultative processes were generally circumvented : teaching unions were informed of their respective authority's intention to submit an application, but were not invited to participate in the 'profiling' of the schemes. Similarly there was little time for anything but the most hasty contacts with representatives of local industry.*

*(Moon and Richardson, 1984, p28)*

Once the winners had been selected, the TVEI Unit settled down to negotiate the fine detail. In this exercise, MSC officials sought to ensure that schemes addressed the minutiae of the criteria. In particular they were anxious to press the question of "enhancement", endeavouring to ensure that the TVEI curriculum was genuinely different to what was there before, and not simply an old product under a new name. They were also keen to discuss expenditure on equipment and on the re-modelling of accommodation.

The Unit seemed less concerned about the very diverse proposals made concerning expenditure on staffing. The pilot schemes thus produced a wide variety of organisational arrangements. In a paper given as early as 1985, Beattie proposed the model shown as Figure 3 (overleaf) to explain the "ideal types" of organisational structure and of management style as exemplified by the role of the project co-ordinator (a post which was a basic MSC requirement). The model sets the various observable patterns of institutional responsibility against the management style options available to the co-ordinator. Although in theory, nine permutations of structure:style are possible, Beattie argued that in practice most cluster around the three boxes marked with an asterix. The centralised/competing-head combination is consistent with the creation of a strong central team of curriculum experts/advisers/trainers; whereas the relative autonomy/adviser combination fits with a structure where the bulk of the resources are devolved to the participating schools and colleges and thus the extra staff are to be found at that level. In terms of the bid and negotiation process, it seems clear that the MSC allowed authorities considerable latitude in deciding where to locate themselves on this continuum. Presumably this was seen as a legitimate area for experimentation in the attempt "to explore and test ways of organising and managing ....".

It was by no means uncommon for the MSC to allow an authority to embark upon a pilot project before the full details of its scheme were agreed. This was particularly the case with regard to the 16-18 phase which was, after all, two years down the line. A number of authorities made a succession of revised submissions to the TVEI Unit and only succeeded in gaining final approval as the first cohort prepared to transfer to college. This extended negotiation can be partly explained by the fact that the Unit's thinking about its objectives for the 16+ phase was evolving in the light of the earliest schemes ; and also as a response to their disappointment about the staying-on rate and the proportion of the early cohorts who stuck with an identifiable TVEI track (Fitzgibbon, 1988). However, the net effect was to prolong the bid/negotiation process and thereby to influence the working relations between sponsor and project

FIGURE 3

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT STYLE IN TVEI

		MANAGEMENT STYLE		
		Competing head	Manager	Adviser
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	Centre- periphery	*		
	Consortium		*	
	Relative autonomy			*

(Adapted from Beattie, 1986, p13)

staff. For some, the ending of pilot negotiations almost dove-tailed into the beginning of the same process in relation to the Extension scheme, and the LEA was thus locked into the semi-permanent role of suppliant.

The final question to ask concerns the rigidity of the original proposal. It seems to have been a general experience that the exact curriculum offer and the related staffing structures did not stand still over the life-time of the pilots. The TVEI Unit proved increasingly willing to allow well-argued variations to the original plans. The problem has often been that those people most clearly identified with the original proposal have found it difficult to countenance change. It might therefore be argued that the bidding process crystallises a certain moment in what might be better seen as an evolutionary process ; it can therefore prove a block to further change.

It is now time to summarise the key characteristics of the bid/negotiation phase as they emerge from this analysis :

1. in making a decision to bid, the lure of resources often seems to over-ride objections of a more principled variety;
2. the tight time-scales which are apparently the norm result in the enclosure of the planning process and the consequent reduction of time for consultation with those who will have to implement the programme;
3. those who are party to the original planning tend to feel a sense of close ownership which can lead them to resist later changes;
4. sponsoring agencies have a need to see evidence of visible changes in order to satisfy their own pay-masters;
5. when criteria are clear, local variations are more readily tolerated;
6. extended processes of negotiation reinforce the sponsors control.

Once again, these tentative conclusions can be carried forward to the cases to be examined in the next chapter.



## 5.4 Contract

A contract has two relationships to chronological time : on the one hand it represents a fixed point in time, an event, something with a date and signatures upon it ; on the other, it is descriptive of a continuing relationship in some cause, a relationship which colours interactions between the parties involved, both actual and possible. Contract as an event is of only passing interest within TVEI. That there is a document which makes certain statements, lays out certain operating procedures for payment, reporting, cancellation and so forth, and comes with a stack of Appendices containing detailed accounts of what is to be done, is all of a curious insignificance in the story. But the relationships which bring the contract into existence and continue because of its existence are all important.

Although the MSC as an executive agency of government was well-accustomed to programme implementation through short-term renewable contracts, LEAs, schools and colleges had no such experience. One might argue that the payment-by-results system of the late nineteenth century represented a form of contractual relationship: no results, no payment. But since then the education system had had no experience of being paid for what it achieved (outcomes) but rather was completely at ease with the thought that it was funded to put young people through a particular experience (a process) in the belief that it was beneficial to them. (3) The clearest expression of this came from Stenhouse (1975) who argued that while teachers were wholly responsible for the professionalism with which they managed the learning process, if their efforts at that level could not be faulted, then they could in no way be held responsible for what pupils actually achieved.

In a 1986 paper by Geoffrey Holland, Director of the MSC during and before the TVEI years, we can see how far the MSC's approach contrasts with that of Stenhouse in particular and the education system in general. Holland affirms the principles underlying TVEI - a scheme to be initiated via the LEAs, taking different forms according to local circumstances, voluntary, and with a locally determined curriculum -, principles which had largely served to allay the fears of the local authorities. However he sets these within an ideological frame which was, at least until recently, utterly at odds with the explicit and the implicit operating values of the education system. He argues that one of the Commission's major concerns is

*to shift the focus of attention in vocational education and training away from processes and towards outcomes. This is not to say that the process does not matter - far from it; but for too long debate has*

*centred around institutions, around the process of education and training and around the curriculum when what matters at the end of the day is the quantity, quality and relevance of the result.*  
(Holland, 1986, p98)

It is not difficult to see the link between a pursuit of outcomes and the use of contract. This is what we want. This is what we will pay for what we want. Who can deliver ? If you offer, and we believe you can do it, we will write down our agreement in the form of a contract.

In Chapter 4 I argued the potency of contracts - as deals which must be sought, negotiated, secured often against competition, and then held on to with some measure of anxiety lest they should be rescinded. Though familiarity with the process of funding through contract may lessen these effects, nevertheless the transmission of resources maintains the client relationship and ensures that the contractee exercises his initiative in the interests of the sponsor, operating as a licensed agent within the territory defined for him by the contract.

Since that argument was first published, it has been suggested that the contract is little more than a myth. After all, despite delays in agreeing terms and occasional hints of cancellation (Fulton, 1987), there is no evidence that TVEI contracts have ever been torn up, funds recovered or LEAs 'sacked'.

Jamieson in particular (1988 and 1990) has taken a hard look at this concept of contract. He writes

*...I would agree that this is a good description of the model in its pure form but I am surprised that so many experienced evaluators have been so uncritical of its actual operation. The practice is that the policy is ill-formulated and pretty unclear at the top allowing a great deal of room for local interpretation...*  
(p447, 1988)

*Central government has always given the LEAs money for education, some of it earmarked for specific priorities. Unfortunately local treasurers have often found more pressing local concerns and central government targets have been missed. TVEI was to be different, the LEAs were asked to sign a contract to deliver against their agreed bid and the contract was to be monitored and audited by the MSC. ....*

*The 'contract' is largely a myth, but like all myths it is both powerful and enduring. Locally it is based around the sacred book, the aptly named LEA submission. TVEI directors and co-ordinators regularly point to it and expect submission from recalcitrant headteachers and LEA officers ('we have to do it because it is in the submission - submit')*

(Jamieson, 1990, p132)

This argument is echoed in Sikes. She writes about the way in which teachers have characterised the MSC as an ogre, a task-master, a whip-cracker.

*... although individuals from the MSC frequently visit the scheme and/or are known by their name because documents bear these ....., the trend among teachers is to de-personalise and homogenize. This may well be a distancing strategy which casts the teacher in the role of individual facing the organisation. On the other hand it may just reflect a view of the commission as a coherent entity and force, although this view is inconsistent with criticisms of the MSC's lack of internal co-ordination*

*On occasion advantage has been taken of the way in which the MSC can be characterised and anthropomorphized.*

*"I use the MSC as a bogeyman. I tell the heads 'Oh you've got to get this or that done because the MSC want it quickly. They might make things difficult for you if you don't do it' - and all along it's me who wants it done. Wicked I am!" (TVEI scheme co-ordinator)*

*"You can use us as a big stick. If it gets the schools or the elected members going that's fine. Feel free to take our name in vain" (MSC Regional Adviser)*

*(Sikes, 1987, p133-34)*

In many LEAs the shadow of the contract fell even further because the authority itself asked its schools to bid for inclusion in TVEI and, increasingly, other programmes. And within the school or college, the same sort of procedures could operate, with heads inviting departments to put themselves forward for activities which will trigger extra allowances. Yet none of this should be a surprise for it is in the nature of contracts to spawn sub-contracts. Those who are subject to contract will inevitably transmit the system downwards.

I would not want to argue against the notion that the TVEI contract viewed as a document, an event, is in many ways a myth, or that while this myth lacks any real potency, it has proved very useful within LEAs and within schools. Yet the terminology of contract survives and is frequently used; and its strength resides in its continuing ability to stand for a relationship of a very particular kind. That is to say, it represents a relationship of dependency, and it signals a breach in the autonomy of the LEA in relation to its schools and colleges, of those schools and colleges in relation to their own internal affairs, and ultimately in the autonomy of the DES and the whole education system.

But, myth or not, it is the contract which legitimises the process of monitoring and that will carry us forward to the next section after pausing to identify what would appear to be the key characteristics of contract as exemplified by TVEI.

These characteristics would include :

1. the fact that the relationships constructed through the process of contract assume a far greater importance than the contract itself;
2. contracts are essentially concerned with outcomes rather than process. This is the case even where the outcomes required appear to relate to new processes (for example, new styles of teaching and learning) which the sponsor is seeking to foster;
3. contractees themselves often find it useful to stress contractual obligations in order to extract compliance and co-operation from within their own sub-systems.

## **5.5 Monitoring**

The role of monitoring within categorical funding has already been discussed in Chapter 4. It was argued there that the dominant feature was the demand for a high level of information, partly achieved as a result of close contact between the parties to the contract. Using Foucault's term, this was described as "coercion by means of observation".

In the case of the TVEI pilot, monitoring was a multi-faceted activity. There were five main aspects to the process :

1. the annual planning dialogue between senior representatives of the TVEI Unit and the LEA, the purpose of which was to review the year's progress and to agree plans - curricular, organisational and financial - for the coming year;
2. meetings of the local steering group to which all subordinate committees, working parties and so forth reported; an MSC nominee was always an ex-officio member (see the earlier section on Criteria);
3. the requirement that all participating LEAs should make regular financial and non-financial returns - to MSC auditors; to the TVEI Unit's own data base on student numbers, timetables, option choices, estimated and actual examination attainments,

etc; and to the "curriculum data base" at Trent Polytechnic which sought details about the timetables for all students in the pilot schools and colleges, together with information about teacher qualifications and "main teaching subjects";

4. the on-going contact with the TVEI Unit's Regional Advisers who were expected to keep in close touch with every institution and every key actor in the group of LEAs for which they were responsible;

5. the national and local evaluation programmes which will be the subject of the next section in this chapter.

In addition, one must not ignore the extent to which the scrutiny of TVEI schemes by other parties and interests - HMI, local inspectorates, local and national politicians, the press, educationalists and others from overseas, some employment interests, HE admission tutors, and many more - increased the Unit's capacity to know what was happening in the pilots. Moreover the LEAs and their co-ordinators were themselves active in the process of image management. If there was a problem, it arose from a surfeit of data, rather than the reverse. The TVEI Unit's insistence on referring to the students enrolled on the pilot schemes as a "research cohort" (4) no doubt provided a motivation for the gathering of all this material, but one can also see such heavy monitoring as a control device. In the pilots themselves, some felt that the level of scrutiny was excessive and antipathetic to experiment and development; and there were continuous and exasperated complaints about the work load involved in meeting the demands.

Most of the remainder of this section will concentrate on the role of the Regional Advisers but a few words of commentary on some of the other elements of the process will be useful.

Jamieson has described the annual planning dialogue as "unquestionably a home-match for local projects" (1990, p132). He argues that the annual report invariably contained more information than the visiting team could digest and "the away players rarely seem to be able to find the really penetrating question". It is obviously true to say that the occasion could be stage-managed, and the prospect of lunch could cut short the debate. However most LEAs saw the forthcoming dialogue as at least a potential ordeal for which careful preparations had to be made and loose ends tied back to the criteria and the contract.. Most meetings ended with a list of issues for the

Regional Adviser to follow-up with the project co-ordinator, thus providing a base agenda for the next twelve months' contact. (5)

The local steering group was very effective in some LEAs, totally invisible in others. In so far as it represented an opportunity for "outsiders" to advise and consult on the conduct of the local scheme, the MSC seemed happy not to press the steering group issue if there appeared to be other avenues open to outside influence - Project Trident, for example. On the whole and with some honourable exceptions, few local interests (including employers) seemed anxious to 'steer' TVEI pilots and their participation in such groups has been more a public relations exercise than anything else. Nevertheless, meetings of steering groups, like the annual planning meeting, were also occasions on which the scheme had to prepare itself for public scrutiny, and therefore once again the project staff needed to be able to account for their activities.

Of the financial audit, Jamieson says

*MSC auditing is little different from any other, the accountants examine important trivia - important because it is necessary to have cost control and to ensure that things like the rules of virement have been followed, but trivial in the sense that it is a long way from teaching and learning.*

*(Jamieson, 1990, p132)*

This aspect of contractual relationships came as a surprise and an irritation to many authorities. (6)

However, despite all this information gathering, contact between the TVEI Unit and the LEA was principally experienced through the working relationship between the MSC's Regional Advisers and the project co-ordinators. The work of these advisers was crucial to the development of TVEI and it is interesting that, within the burgeoning commentary on the scheme, so little attention has been paid to their role. One exception to this is the paper by Sikes and Taylor in Gleeson (1987).

Sikes and Taylor point out that the MSC had no standard mode of implementation to commend to LEAs, no central body of authenticated expertise, and indeed could not hope to comprehend the diversity of local situations, existing relationships and *modus operandi*.

To handle most of their communication with LEAs, the MSC therefore appointed as its Regional Advisers people with substantial experience of education at a senior level (most had been either heads of schools or had worked in an LEA advisory

service). Each had seven or eight projects to supervise. Their role was essentially two-fold. The first element was the task of keeping the scheme on course. As Sikes and Taylor say

*In the past attempts at large-scale educational innovation have tended to be less than successful in realizing their objectives because they have encountered 'tradition', inertia and a lack of commitment on the part of those not intimately involved ..... the MSC has recognised this. Despite its dispersal of generous financial resources and its ability to implement innovation more quickly than the DES, we contend that in order to avoid (or at least, minimize) intransigence or obstructiveness, it operates a strategy of subversive persuasion based in a rhetoric of contractual reciprocity.*

*(Sikes and Taylor, 1987, p56,)*

They go on to report an address given by a Senior Regional Adviser to a conference of secondary teachers in 1985. The Adviser explained that the MSC had "no legal locus whatsoever to interfere with the curriculum". Indeed, the Regional Adviser's task was to "persuade the LEAs that they own the curriculum development within TVEI". But the crunch comes in the tail : "Our interest in the curriculum really amounts to (whether) the emerging curriculum will meet the objectives that are written into the contracts".

This final sentence points to the second aspect of the role. That consisted of the responsibility to act as mediators whenever LEAs sought to make revisions in their scheme which needed (and most did) to be referred back to MSC head-quarters.

*It is usually through the Regional Adviser that schemes clarify the acceptability of new developments whether these be courses, enhancements, off-site experiences or appointments (to TVEI funded posts); and receive feed-back on issues like ability spread, sex-stereotyping, equal opportunities, questions of future funding and so on.*

*..... But the sort of straightforward, black-and-white clarification co-ordinators want is not always forthcoming. Regional Advisers have signed the Official Secrets Act and are not always at liberty to disclose what they know.*

*(op cit, p65)*

The last remark neatly demonstrates where the primary loyalty lay. However it still begs the question of who at headquarters made the decisions as to what was 'acceptable' : can it be that Advisers themselves had a considerable influence not only in conveying the questions but also in providing the answers ?

Developing these ideas further in a collaborative article written with the Open University TVEI evaluation team (Dale et al, 1989b), the same writers argue that despite the MSC's dominant position with regard to funding and regulating TVEI,

they were far from being a key source of information. Instead they are best seen as "initiators" of innovation and, once schemes were in operation, as "interpreters" of individual schemes. The national framework for the scheme must necessarily remain couched in a language of high generality, "allowing a diversity of local responses to be mediated, regulated and consolidated by the MSC TVEI Unit through the interpretative role of the regional advisers". They go on to say

*Theirs is a delicate task of discursive diplomacy where a new vocabulary of the vocationalist ethos is insinuated into the conventional rhetorics of educational policy-making and implementation. And this seems to be done in a way that does not immediately threaten the identities and autonomy of established educationalists, and yet provides a basis for transformation which appears to articulate with conventionally established educational perspectives at all levels.*

*(Dale, et al, 1989b, p87)*

Thus the monitoring process, and the relationships which grow up within it (7), play a significant part in the establishment and maintenance of a discourse which sustains the value assumptions of the sponsor. It is true that this hegemonic function pervades all the elements within the categorical funding process; but nowhere is it more importantly developed than in the dialogue between the TVEI Unit and the LEA, and this lies at the heart of the monitoring process. And once prompted by routine observation to assimilate, use and even "own" the new discourse, (and in my view this is equally true when applicants bidding for funds choose, albeit somewhat cynically, to adopt the words and concepts that they feel will demonstrate their conformity to the values of the funder), surveillance does indeed become "permanent in its effects even if discontinuous in action"(see Chapter 4).

These then appear to be the key characteristics of the monitoring process within TVEI :

1. monitoring is a multi-faceted operation which shades over into normal administrative procedures;
2. occasions such as annual reviews which require the contractee to make a public demonstration of programme activities permit and extend scrutiny;
3. monitoring processes (especially when undertaken by representatives of the funding agency) provide opportunities for re-inforcing the discourse.



## 5.6 Evaluation

The bald facts about the evaluation of the TVEI pilot are these :

1. the second round authorities were required, by their contracts, to allocate 1% of their budgets (ie about £4000 per annum) to a "local evaluation";
2. by the time their schemes were underway, most of the first round authorities had secured supplementary funds from the MSC to commission their own local evaluations, often on a much more generous scale;
3. the MSC commissioned two national evaluations to cover the pilot phase: a team at Leeds University undertook an investigation of "Curriculum Change and Development", using case studies of particular schools within selected projects; while the NFER investigated "Organisation, Operation and Reception" using survey questionnaires with groups in all projects, supplemented by a few case studies. The total budget for these two national studies was £2 million;
4. in addition the MSC sponsored a series of separate studies on special issues and various supplementary projects as they arose.

This outline of the evaluation indicates a total outlay of something around £5 million, and this excludes the sum spent on the monitoring activities outlined in the previous section. The whole gigantic exercise was co-ordinated by a "division" within the TVEI Unit. Its responsibilities were

- *offering professional advice to TVEI co-ordinators and evaluators*
  - *co-ordinating the various strands of evaluation*
  - *communicating with evaluators and co-ordinators*
  - *analysing and summarizing reports and data*
  - *disseminating information about evaluation and evaluation outcomes to all interested parties*
  - *identifying gaps in evaluation and commissioning further studies to fill these gap*
- (MSC, TVEI Evaluation Information Leaflets, undated. ?1985)

When we add to the estimated £5 million, the huge costs involved in running this division in terms of staffing and, above all, printing and publication, the grand total clearly exceeded all previous expenditure on educational evaluation in this country. Not surprisingly, one result was the generation of an enormous body of material. Much of the national work was of a very high quality, although its sheer volume

probably militated against it being as widely read as it deserved. Local evaluation reports had a more restricted circulation (DES, 1991b) but the networks among the evaluators, stimulated by conferences and meetings set up by the TVEI Unit itself, resulted in a good deal of paper writing and theorising in the education journals and also fed into the seemingly never-ending flow of publications, pamphlets and so forth put out by the Unit.

So why have so many resources been put into evaluation ? The MSC's own answer to this question was simple :

*TVEI is a pilot programme and everyone with an interest in education needs to know if it works and how it works.*

*(MSC, op cit)*

The reality is of course more subtle. It is inconceivable that the answer provided to the "if it works" question could have turned out to be "it doesn't work !" : inconceivable because of the scale of the commitment, the size of the enterprise, and the political significance of the whole thing. If the zero option may one day be open to the historian, it was certainly a luxury denied to the evaluators of TVEI. Success thus assured, evaluation has concentrated on "how it works" and such negative findings as did emerge have been assimilated into the general category of implementation problems.

Before returning to this theme it would be useful to look at the special case of the local evaluator. (There is less to gain from a close examination of the national evaluations because they were far more firmly located in mainstream styles of education research and evaluation, concentrating on the tried and tested techniques of survey and case-study, followed by substantial reports containing anonymised and homogenised information and findings.) For most LEAs the emergence of formal TVEI evaluation was co-terminous with their own growing interest in and concern for evaluation. Despite the current ease with which LEA officers and staff now speak of evaluation and assume its role in many of their activities, in the early eighties it was still a largely alien activity, seen as something attached to Schools Council projects and not much else. The LEAs' own work in this area had been largely confined to gathering pupil statistics.

The requirement to evaluate their own TVEI programme was therefore, for many, a catalytic experience. As Jamieson (1990) says,

*Project personnel, very often with the assistance of the evaluator, began to acquire the language and concepts of educational evaluation (and in many cases of education itself) which permitted them to have useful dialogues with each other.*

*(Jamieson, 1990, p137)*

The effect of this experience can be clearly perceived not only in the manner in which LEAs came to discuss evaluation in the Extension phase of TVEI, but also in the way they have handled later moves towards such matters as school development plans, INSET, and teacher appraisal.

The MSC produced a rather formidable list of "Hard/Statistical Issues" and a much shorter list of "Soft/Attitudinal Issues" about which "questions should be asked" in both the "immediate and continuing" period and the "longer term". They suggested that LEAs would have to choose between a "single LEA" or a "consortium" arrangement for their local evaluation, and that a principal evaluator, preferably "independent", should be "identified and commissioned". Their guidance resulted in very diverse practice. About half the authorities in the first and second round appointed a named individual from higher education, but from the second round on such people had to consider the financial logistics of the small annual budget. Most often the HE institution accepted several one-off commissions and operated a team approach to the task while still tailoring their work to each authority (eg, Open University and CARE, East Anglia). The ultimate in rationalising the task was to seek a sufficient number of contracts to employ a team of one or two researchers and then to operate a standardised package of largely survey-based work across the consortium (eg, Lancaster University, which had contracts with 12+ authorities). Some LEAs avoided direct links with HE by making their own internal appointments (eg, Hertfordshire), often on part or even full-time secondments, though it was not unusual for such people to have some kind of external supervision.

This diversity of approach, coupled with the diversity in the schemes themselves, makes it difficult to generalise about the work undertaken. However, McCabe (1988) has suggested that most local evaluations tended to move over time from descriptive reports based on observations and discussions, to an examination of the organisation of the scheme and its location within the LEA's structure; then on to more student-focussed surveys, often concerned with attitudes to work and with response to TVEI, and finally towards the investigation of specific issues/topics/problems which were matters of importance to the LEA's TVEI team. (8)

These evaluation exercises were sometimes fraught, especially in the early stages when LEAs did not understand the need to negotiate a clear contract with their evaluators and indeed often did not share with them a common expectation as to what evaluation could achieve. But for the most part the working relationships which emerged were close and supportive of the project and its staff. As Gleeson et al (1990) say, it was often possible to manage a local evaluation as an extended case study, developing along the way "the process of formative and action-oriented research within TVEI - which was by nature experimental and supportive of idiosyncratic innovation". Local evaluation was able to generate and to focus internal debate about the LEA programme; and this was at least partly due to the fact that the evaluator travelled around the programme's sites, raising and exposing issues through the very choice of questions to be discussed. Consequently much local evaluation tended to proceed in private : Gleeson et al say

*... public accounts cannot wholly reflect, in the interests of confidentiality, the contribution external evaluation has been able to make in its support of individual institutions, their teachers, and also to project management teams.*

*(Gleeson et al, 1990, p 111)*

McCabe (1990) also says that "most of the local evaluator's activity ... never appears in the literature or any report".

For McCabe, who has been responsible for a number of evaluations in the North East, there is apparently no problem with this cosy relationship. In 1986 he wrote "Evaluators cannot in fact remain independent and external, at best they can be described as semi-detached" (p32); and later in the same paper, he advises authorities to appoint as evaluators "people with whom the dialogue and process can be carried on easily. Part of the process may involve the evaluator in in-service work or in discussions on your behalf ...." (p38). In 1990 he writes

*When you ask your evaluator to go round the schools and report on progress towards some favoured objective, we all realise that he or she is largely promoting that aspect of the project for you and at the same time giving your colleagues in schools opportunities to sort out their ideas and express their interest.*

*(op cit, p14-15)*

This symbiotic relationship could of course seem enormously useful, and for an educational theorist/academic, it was a very beguiling role to play. But it is not a role which went unquestioned. For example, Gleeson et al talk about the distinction between evaluation and confirmation, and about the fact that

*The pressure on LEAs to be seen as successful managers of centrally-funded initiatives may be reflected in the way evaluators tend to be guided towards examples of 'good' or 'interesting' practice.*

*(Gleeson et al, 1990, p109)*

Others are even more concerned. In a paper pointedly titled "What is Evaluation after the MSC?", Nixon questions the whole concept of "formative" evaluation in the context of categorically funded projects. He remarks that the notion of TVEI as a carefully controlled experiment gave way over the years, especially after the announcement of the Extension in 1986, to an attempt to permeate the whole curricular map for the 14-18 age range. "Viewed from this perspective, evaluation is seen as having an important part to play in shaping the innovation as it develops". Worried by this thought, Nixon goes back to examine the original concept of formative evaluation as developed by Scriven (1967). He finds that Scriven argued that a key characteristic of formative evaluation must be the scope to critique the worthwhileness of programme goals, and moreover to draw attention to unintended outcomes. Nixon then goes on to say some disturbing things about the supposedly formative nature of TVEI evaluation:

*(Scriven's) perspective, which informed the development of evaluation throughout the 1970s, is in certain crucial respects singularly inappropriate to TVEI, where outcomes are not only pre-specified, but where that prespecification is reified into a formal contract between the LEA and the Training Agency (formerly, the MSC). Under the terms of the funding agreement, an LEA is contractually bound to 'deliver' the curriculum package as specified in its TVEI submission. The critical reflective function that formative evaluation might otherwise be expected to fulfil is, therefore, seriously limited; it can help tease out the practical implications of the original statement of intent, but is rarely expected to question its basic assumptions.*

*(Nixon, 1989, p129)*

This comment represents a serious criticism, for if the evaluation is neither summative nor genuinely formative, what is it ?

Clearly the tradition of "democratic" evaluation which had emerged from the curriculum development movement of the sixties and seventies was being directly challenged. For in those decades, curriculum development was not directly in the hands of central government, but rather was sponsored by mediating agencies (most importantly, the Schools Council), who facilitated rather than directly managed projects. Such agencies were eventually receptive to advice about the crucial importance for effective change of the initiative, commitment and sense of "ownership" felt by the grass-roots practitioner and the individual school. Thus evaluators came to see themselves as free-wheeling "knowledge brokers" with a

responsibility to all the "stake-holders" in a given enterprise (MacDonald 1974). No-one should pull rank in order to gain control of the evaluative exercise : the right to know was more important than the right to manage.

Categorical funding shifts responsibility for initiating change back from the practitioner to the centre, often to central government and to specific spending ministers. In this context, evaluation practices are forced to change.

MacDonald himself, with Kushner, has written a powerful paper pointing up what they see as the dangers implicit in this situation. But they do not take the easy way out and blame the problems on scheme administrators; in my view, that would be not only wrong but would also serve to distract attention from the structural reasons which underpin this challenge to the prevailing practice of evaluation. Instead they give what can only be called a sympathetic account of the situation of the manager. They point out that those who manage rather than facilitate programmes have a "heightened sensitivity to bad news".

*These civil servant managers who commission evaluations are vulnerable to unfavourable judgements of the policies they are implementing or of the ways in which they have chosen to prosecute them. Typically they seek from the evaluator knowledge that will increase their control over programme participants and maintain fidelity of interpretation and action across distributed and distant sites. They also want evaluators to assist development at the local level, to help participants make the most of their piece of the action. They do not want and will strenuously oppose, policy evaluation of a kind that could embarrass their superiors by raising questions about the validity of the programme rationale. Neither do they want their own performance as managers evaluated, though they may welcome confidential, off-the-record advice.*

*.... The administrators who manage these programmes are under no illusions about the political imperatives that constitute their brief. These programmes, though they may well bear the official status of 'pilot' or 'experiment', and though they may well be saturated with evaluation processes apparently designed to establish their worth, are expressions of political conviction rather than explorations of educational hypotheses.*

*(Kushner and MacDonald, 1987, pp152 and 155)*

Although in this extract, Kushner and MacDonald seem to be most concerned with the national level, there are clear parallels with the situation at the local level. They argue that local evaluators, "faced with these sensitivities and not without an interest in their own marketability", usually choose one of two roles : that of "ally" to management which may afford "a seat at the high table of management" and thus

provide scope for "the promotion of educational values that may be more prominent in the rhetoric of the programme than in the reality of its implementation"; or alternatively, that of "nourishing the grass roots of programme action", contributing "to the quality of the programme at the point of delivery" and looking towards the needs of the teachers involved. Both these they describe as forms of "participant evaluation" which provide evaluators with "honourable occupations and defensible interpretations of their responsibilities". However, while they admit that such roles are 'legitimate' in the sense that they are supportive to a policy devised within the framework of a representative democracy, the rest of their paper goes on to call into question whether this form of funding and its associated implications for evaluation are adequate within a genuinely democratic society. I propose to return to that argument in my conclusion.

The account and critique of TVEI evaluation in this section may be seen as an explanation of both the quantity and the blandness of much that has been written about the scheme. The scope for undertaking searching analysis of schemes such as TVEI, despite their huge importance, within the normal confines of personal research are so very limited when compared to the wide expanses of commentary made possible by the sponsor's funding : and given the structural constraints which are built into the logic of categorical funding, it is scarcely surprising that evaluation is largely concerned first with implementation; and second with accountability, upwards to the MSC, and ever upwards to the appropriate government ministers.

In sum, the key characteristics of evaluation as demonstrated by the TVEI experience would seem to be :

1. that it is essentially concerned with the processes of implementation. Summative evaluation, in Scriven's sense, is not on the agenda ; and formative evaluation becomes something which closely resembles a management strategy;
2. local evaluators experience both a pressure and a temptation to 'go native', though in doing so, they may raise the level of awareness and debate through the questions that they pose and the issues to which they direct attention;
3. those who commission evaluation - national as well as local - are themselves operating under constraint : they look to evaluation to legitimise the programme, and their own success in operationalising it.

## **5.7 Replication/Impact**

The problem with pilot schemes which stretch over many years is that the rest of the world does not stand still while the experiment is conducted. Moreover, to employ a cliché much loved in TVEI circles, the goal posts are constantly shifting. The educational environment which spawned TVEI changed and the scheme correspondingly had to adapt, and to find new rationales and even new strategies. By the late eighties, its thrust was accordingly less clear-cut and less decisive.

Most commentators on TVEI agree that its conception demonstrated a certain brilliance in that, by employing the MSC as pay-master, an educational policy succeeded in by-passing the tortuous procedures of the Rate Support Grant and directly tempted all but the most recalcitrant education committees. Moreover it opened up the curriculum itself to government priorities in a way which neatly side-stepped all the many layers of influence, control and vested interest which had previously stood between policy and practice. The system was shocked, but it was also amazed at the audacity of the manoeuvre. A knight's move on a field which more often saw pawn-like rigidity !

Much of this scenario has now changed. The government, through the Education Reform Act, has secured detailed control of education, partly by employing yet again a form of contractual obligation in the very device of delegating most educational spending to the institutional level against the 'delivery' of a required programme. In particular it has secured a degree of control over the curriculum which goes beyond anything anticipated before 1987. Moreover, the thrust of its curricular policy, while paying lip-service to the achievements and priorities of TVEI, contains much which can be seen as antithetical to the scheme's overall principles. An emphasis on a curriculum defined and imposed (if not necessarily taught) under traditional subject headings, re-inforced by a testing system which is intended to be a high-stakes boundary marker for students, especially at 16, poses serious questions about what space remains for popular developments identified with TVEI : cross-curricular work, active and open-ended learning strategies, links with the world outside school including work experience, and studies in areas which are peripheral to the territory of the National Curriculum.

Not surprisingly the MSC/TA had to adopt defensive strategies. As an on-going scheme, TVEI became, in the way of things, a vested interest in its own right : from an innovative strategy for policy implementation it grew into a well-diffused but



recognisable organisational structure, with an identifiable personnel, opportunities for career advancement and a defined credo. One early response to the threat implied by the National Curriculum was to suggest that while it was concerned with "product", TVEI was essentially about "process": thus there could be synthesis rather than antithesis (Anne Jones, 1989). She and others have argued the wisdom of using matrix structures to explore the degree to which TVEI principles and practices can be integrated with and explored through the attainment targets of the the statutory curriculum.

Gambles (1991) referred to this process as "holding on to the gains of TVEI", a phrase which seemed to reflect accurately the sentiments expressed by the MSC/TA itself in its "Focus Statement". This first appeared in 1987 and was later adopted as a joint statement with the NCC. It attempts to re-formulate TVEI principles through the assertion of five broadly expressed aims concerned with matters such as knowledge of the world of work, the attainment of qualifications appropriate to a "highly technological society" and the development of personal effectiveness (see Figure 4 overleaf). Each aim begins with the repeated phrase "By making sure that .....". It is arguable that in this, we see a transition from the bright, confident morning of requirements and criteria to the more hazy, tentative afternoon of aspirations.

Organisationally, the TVEI interest was to some extent incorporated into planning for the National Curriculum through the appointment of one of its best known Regional Advisers to the National Curriculum Council and further the choice of that individual to chair the working party charged to look at the "Whole Curriculum". Despite alleged hesitations and delays in the publication of the reports of this committee, Circular no 6, which gave preliminary guidance on "whole curriculum planning", did appear at the end of 1989 (NCC, 1989), and the much fuller statement, The Whole Curriculum, in following March (NCC, 1990a). In April the first of the detailed statements about the individual 'elements' identified, Education for Economic and Industrial Understanding, was published (NCC, 1990b). In June there appeared further pamphlets on Health Education (NCC, 1990c) and Careers Education and Guidance (NCC, 1990d). Environmental Education (NCC, 1990e) was published in September and Education for Citizenship (NCC, 1990f) in November. For the purpose of this argument, it is useful to note how many of the principles and priorities of TVEI are reflected in these 'themes', and the 'skills' and 'dimensions' such as equal opportunities associated with them in The Whole Curriculum. However, even as these publications emerged, funds for the TVEI extension scheme were halved and it was announced that more Training Agency functions were to be devolved to the new local Training and Enterprise Councils.

# WHAT IS TVEI TRYING TO DO?

TVEI aims to ensure that the education of 14-18 year olds provides young people with learning opportunities which will equip them for the demands of working life in a rapidly changing society.

TVEI seeks to influence the Education of 14-18 year olds in 5 explicit ways:

- (1) By making sure **the curriculum** uses every opportunity to relate education to the world of work, by using concrete/real examples if possible.
- (2) By making sure that young people get the **knowledge, competencies and qualifications** they need in a highly technological society which is itself part of **Europe** and the **world** economy.
- (3) By making sure that young people themselves get **direct opportunities** to learn about the nature of the economy and the world of work - through work experience, work shadowing, projects in the community and so on.
- (4) By making sure that young people learn **how** to be effective people, solve problems, work in teams, be enterprising and creative through the **way** they are taught.
- (5) By making sure that young people have access to initial **guidance and counselling**, and then continuing education and training, and opportunities for **progression** throughout their lives.

**Figure 4 : MSC/TA "Focus Statement" 1987**

But replication and impact are to be measured on wider dimensions. In policy terms, TVEI surely demonstrated the effectiveness of contractually-based policy initiatives; and, however briefly, it is worth rehearsing the developments which the scheme sponsored and which substantially influenced practice beyond the pilot programme (even though the evaluation of that influence must necessarily be intuitive rather than precise).

First, TVEI undoubtedly paved the way for the incorporation of Technology into the National Curriculum. The quality of the debate surrounding the development of attainment targets, programmes of work and curriculum strategies for Technology was a testimony to the extent to which this area of experience (to use HMI terminology) had been the object of intensive curriculum development during the years of the TVEI pilot. (9) Outstanding questions are entirely concerned with how, not whether. Moreover, the theme of "technology across the curriculum" demonstrates that Technology is no longer bolted down within its own time-table slot but is rather to be incorporated in Science, in Maths, in the Humanities, and indeed in most areas of the curriculum. Second, TVEI encouraged curriculum development in a wide range of activities beyond Technology and its related areas : these include Business Studies, Home Economics, Media and Creative Studies, and many others, including some with a very local orientation such as tourism, boat-building and horticulture. TVEI practices also moved from an early preference for seeing Information Technology as a free-standing area of study towards its incorporation and integration across the whole curriculum. Third, TVEI undoubtedly made a considerable impact upon thinking about post-16 curricula : the MSC's demand for an 'entitlement' curriculum that widened the offer beyond a straight choice between the academic or the vocational track has fed directly into the move towards 'core skills' in the post-compulsory years (FEU May 1989). Fourth, TVEI influenced not only the content but also the pedagogy and the assessment of upper secondary education, by providing a focus and an incentive for more active styles of teaching and learning and more participatory forms of assessment, notably profiling. Fifth, TVEI shifted the limelight of curriculum development to areas previously in the shadows, and thus offered opportunities for career enhancement, promotion and leadership to a new group of educators (Harland 1987a) in such a way that we are unlikely to see teachers of vocationally focussed and applied areas of the curriculum creep back to the relative isolation that was once their lot. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, TVEI promoted collaborative styles of working, within and between schools and colleges. This process was reinforced by provision for INSET and other opportunities for shared discussion and negotiation, supported by a steady stream of publications and

quite unashamed forms of 'hype'. It could be argued that this increased professional debate and developed critical self-awareness to a level not achieved by the curriculum development of the sixties and seventies, for all its associated "teacher-as-researcher" model. (10)

There remains considerable scope for disagreement about the extent to which TVEI was successful under all these headings. For example the Leeds evaluation team has cast doubt on the degree which teachers genuinely adopted new learning styles (Barnes et al, 1987). Other local evaluations reported disappointed and critical comments from as many as 40% of the early cohorts (Hinckley, 1987) and a lack of coherence in the management of work experience (Saunders 1987). Another local evaluation which looked at GCSE results reported that TVEI students were performing below expectation (Fitzgibbon et al, 1988), while evidence about the depressed level of staying-on rates at 16 and the lack of progress in tempting girls into non-traditional choices was widespread. Thus it is clear that the reality often fell short of the rhetoric about TVEI. But on another view, rhetoric can usefully set the pace : cheer-leaders are there to create an atmosphere of high expectation, and of confidence that the team is going to deliver.

To conclude this section on replication and impact, we need to raise two final questions : what was the role of the TVEI Unit in supporting this process? and what was required of LEAs and schools as their contribution ?

Apart from exposure in the national and the educational press - for which material was readily available from the MSC's Press Office - the Unit itself kept up a continuous flow of free publications. As well as printing and circulating the bulky reports from the two national evaluations, the most notable and noticed publications were the magazine style TVEI Insight, published three times a year from September 1984, and the later series of booklets, TVEI Developments. Of these, TVEI Insight was an unashamed exercise in scheme promotion. Photographs, jazzy lay-outs and short snappy articles spread the glad news of officially sanctioned 'good practice' around the country. Editorials read like the vicar's slot in a parish magazine : and just as in the parish magazine, no-one questions the existence of God, so in TVEI Insight no one queries the value or the effectiveness of the programme. It must be assumed that the audience for this publication was not only teachers, inside and outside the scheme, but also the wider world of the scheme's political sponsors and ultimately, the voter.

TVEI Developments made its first appearance in 1986. Its object was "to give a few contributors rather more space in which to relate how specific schemes have been put together, how they have developed and, importantly, what problems have been encountered and possible changes foreseen and planned ...". Thus the tone is somewhat more sober and the booklets contain a series of short essays around a specific theme.

The editorial choice of themes for both these publications obviously reflected MSC priorities. Once again the critical voice is absent. In a beguilingly mixed metaphor, Jamieson (1988) calls them "TVEI review dishes" which serve up "blow by blow accounts of what happened in local projects". As such they clearly met a need perceived by the MSC to build a corpus of material about TVEI to feed the discourse and to establish a sense of its presence and permanence.

It has already been noted in the previous section that the TVEI Unit was generous to evaluators in the matter of setting up workshops and supporting networks. The Unit also permitted and even encouraged LEAs to show the same sort of generosity within their own schemes. In a world where teachers were inured to attending INSET in redundant school buildings, TVEI introduced them to residential conferences in comfortable hotels. This is a far from trivial point in the calculation as to how the MSC sought to enhance the image and hence the impact of TVEI.

The second question concerned what was required of the LEAs, schools and colleges and it is more difficult to answer because the expectation was about an attitude rather than a specific set of activities. Essentially pilot schemes were expected to be seen and heard.

To meet this obligation TVEI programmes were expected to hold their doors open in a manner to which the education system was scarcely accustomed : to other interests and audiences, which would include industry and employers, the press, and overseas visitors; to other LEAs; and of course to the MSC itself. One symptom of this greater awareness of the world outside was the steady improvement in the presentation of LEA materials, partly under the influence of the technologies which TVEI made available to them but also partly as a result of exposure and example. TVEI heralded the arrival of public relations in many LEAs.

We must of course remember that in any individual institution the impact of TVEI was always limited and shaped by what had existed before; and moreover that TVEI

resources, no matter how generous they may have appeared, were essentially marginal when compared with the on-going expenditure on system maintenance, whether at LEA level or at institutional level. Thus it is unreasonable to expect radical transformation. It is nevertheless remarkable how far, after the early years of suspicion, TVEI succeeded in recruiting teacher loyalty. Some would say that this was because teachers and project staff found that the MSC yoke was indeed light: that they were able to take the money after a mere ritualistic gesture towards the MSC's requirements and then undertake developments which fitted their own priorities. Others would claim that there is in the TVEI philosophy the seeds of a much sounder approach to mass upper secondary education, plus the opportunity for teachers to improve their professional skills and job satisfaction.

My view is that while much of this may be partly true, nevertheless the mechanisms of categorical funding and the logic of contractual arrangements work to recruit those who take the king's shilling in a manner which is so subtle that they continue to see themselves as free agents. I would hope that such a position has been amply supported by the account of TVEI given in this chapter.

It is more difficult to extract generalisations about the replication/impact phase than it has been for previous elements in this analysis. The conduct, the content and the context of TVEI have been unique to itself, and the same is true of its outcomes. However, we might at least conclude that :

1. the probability of substantial replication and sustained impact can be re-inforced by extensive promotion. For this reason, those who take the money must expect to operate in the public eye. Doors must be open at all times;
2. much will depend upon the extent to which the sponsor is able to turn compliance into advocacy. But to be involved but detached is a difficult position to sustain. The dependency generated by specific grant encourages those who, over time, become active and vocal supporters, and freezes out the rest.

## 5.8 Discussion

In conclusion I want to make three broad points about the larger significance of the TVEI policy experiment : the first concerns the pattern of relationships within the education system and their significance for the management of change; the second concerns the impact on what Dale has termed the "mandate" of the educational service; and the third relates to the significance of TVEI for the formulation of educational policy.

### *Relationships within the system*

TVEI was a policy initiative designed (in an off-the-cuff style) to address a range of perceived problems in schooling : pupils were trapped by a self-addressing and isolated teaching profession into an irrelevant, de-motivating and over-academic curriculum; they were therefore leaving school with little knowledge relevant to working life and with very little understanding of industry or of the functioning of a capitalist economy. Any real solution to these problems would need to smash existing ways of doing things.

The TVEI initiative thus took on the task of shifting not only the content of the curriculum but also the existing ways of bringing about and managing the process of change. This was largely done through a process of disaggregating what were previously distinct agencies that related to each other in ways that were well understood. By routing money through the MSC, TVEI broke the monopoly of the DES in educational matters. By using the money to enter into contracts with parts of the system, it created divisions and ambiguities in what had previously been a fairly clear line of delegated responsibility : some LEAs, but not - for some time - all; some parts of an LEA's operation, but not all; some schools and colleges within an LEA, but not all; some departments and teachers within an institution, but not all. Among those party to the contracts, new dependencies and obligations were thereby created. Some LEA officers now owed an allegiance to an agency outside the LEA. Similarly some teachers were answerable to project staff rather than to their own senior management for some of their activities. Heads came to realise that the *quid pro quo* for the resources received was the loss of some autonomy. Thus many things that had been simple became more fragmented and ambiguous, and as a result, previously unquestioned assumptions had to be reconsidered.

Despite the later popularity of TVEI, the scheme was for some time responsible for creating a substantial insider/outsider culture. In an early and influential paper, Saunders describes how TVEI created "innovation enclaves" within schools ; he defines this as

*a set of practices, expressed in a policy text, which are inserted or which intervene in an established set of practices ... accompanied by a strong rhetoric which allies participants and distinguishes them from non-participants.*

*(Saunders, 1986)*

House gives a similar but more general account of the impact of innovation accompanied by "inducements" :

*In .. a tight economy, rewards and job slots are in scarce supply. If participation in the innovation increases promotion opportunities for innovative teachers, it reduces opportunities for those excluded. Excluded teachers are in a position where it is rational to attack the innovation.*

*(House, 1974, p96)*

I want to argue that the practice of categorical funding within the TVEI scheme challenged what policy makers took to be a monolithic system, and imposed something much closer to what has been called a pattern of 'competitive individualism'. They were therefore able to challenge not only the content of schooling but also the traditional routes through which change had been attempted.

### ***Altering the "mandate"***

Dale (1989b) produces a sophisticated argument in which he claims that TVEI represented an attempt to move schools and colleges further away from the educational mandate and operational style associated with the DES, and closer to that of the Department of Employment and its satellite, the MSC. Later I shall go further and suggest that it is not only TVEI but categorical funding as a strategy which does this and that for MSC we should read something broader such as modern managerialism; but for the time being I wish to stay with Dale's argument.

On the matter of the mandates, Dale quotes in full the objectives of each department as set out in the white paper Working Together (DES, 1986a, Cmnd 9823). That document says of the DES



*The principal aim of the Department of Education and Science is to improve standards throughout the education service and to increase the value obtained for the substantial resources allocated to it by the taxpayer and the ratepayer.*

Of the Department of Employment it says

*The prime aim of the Department of Employment is to encourage the development of an enterprise economy.*

Later it is said that a key aspect of its work is to

*.. improve training arrangements so that young people get a better preparation for work.*

Given the thrust of TVEI it is not difficult to agree with the argument that the initiative was intended to move the education system closer to the mandate of the MSC and its parent department.

The contrasts in operational style which Dale draws between the DES and the MSC are summarised in Figure 5 (overleaf). It is important to recognise that some of the differences identified here are no longer as stark as they were in the early and mid-eighties. I have therefore suggested in the heading that the argument best fits the years between the announcement of TVEI in 1982 and the publication of the Education Reform Bill in 1987. However the relevance of this analysis to TVEI will be immediately obvious. What Dale suggests is that, in accommodating TVEI, the education system has taken on something of a hybridised version of these two styles of operation. As a result teachers have become more and more accustomed to categorical funding - and hence to the bidding process; to demands for increased and more specific accountability; to more extensive and intrusive monitoring; to new expectations about inter-institutional arrangements; and to a speed of change to which they have not previously been accustomed. It is not difficult to draw from these arguments a view that the significance of TVEI is much greater than the impact of the scheme itself.

### ***New patterns of policy formulation***

Educational change in Britain has tended to emerge from one of three sources : either it has been the product of debate and consultation among practitioners, aimed at improving some part of the curriculum; or it has been the result of recommendations arising from the work of some blue ribbon committee; or it has been brought about by legislation. Where government has been involved, Moon and Richardson, writing in 1984, claim that the established policy style is characterized by "sectorization,

FIGURE 5

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CAPACITY AND THE MODUS OPERANDI OF THE DES AND THE MSC : 1982-87

DES	MSC
Department of State + Cabinet Minister accountable via Parliament to the electorate	Public Board with executive responsibilities members delegated by interests they represent
Bureaucratic, rule-following process-orientated	Technocratic/commercial action-orientated
Operates via LEAs	Operates directly through own regional network
System maintenance/development	Crisis management
On-going budgetary commitments ; much educational spending outside its direct control	Funds short term programmes via contracts with providers
Financial approval precedes spending	Post hoc accountability for spending involving much auditing/monitoring
Demand led expenditure ; re-active	Supply-side interventions ; pro-active
Assumption that education will be state-funded	Looks for best buy ; efficiency, cost-cutting, best bid
"Allocative" state activity ; provision of public service in accordance with constitutional and legislative codes	"Productive" state activity ; crisis management/avoidance needing rapid non- rule governed decisions

(Adapted from an analysis in Dale, 1989b)

clientilism, consultation, institution of compromise, and the development of exchange relationships : all working to discourage sudden policy change". Elsewhere they say that policies usually "emerge as the result of a process - usually fairly lengthy - of consultation with various non-governmental organisations". They claim that TVEI "avoided or side-stepped all these traditional routes".

They go on to argue that "the unilateral declaration of the initiative was a gamble on the part of the government" and claim that the announcement was very rapidly followed by a move to establish a consultative body (the National Steering Group) to legitimate the policy. Their conclusion sums up what I would wish to say on this score :

*We suggest, however, that the TVEI experiment is of wider interest to observers of the UK policy style. It suggests that under certain conditions radical innovation is possible, even (or especially?) in a period of resource squeeze. Policy-makers have been prepared to chance their arm; they did have resources (money) to offer, and the policy is not being universally applied (hence those who really oppose it do not have to participate). But we need to note that a relatively crude style of deciding what you want to do, announcing it and attaching some cash to it, may have wider implications for policy-making in hard times.*

*(Moon and Richardson, 1984)*

This leads to their conclusion that the rest of Whitehall had not failed to notice the success of the MSC strategy. It is part of my argument that the message about categorical funding was well learned. The next chapters will examine this new approach to policy making in the hands of the DES.

In concluding this review of TVEI, therefore, I want to argue that it is the fact and the specific mechanisms of categorical funding which have enabled these transformations to occur in the relationships between central and local government, in the apparent "mandate" of the DES as well as in its operational style, and in the formulation of policy. All these changes might have been wished for ; all might have come about without the encroachment of contract : but, as we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, without an effective means for linking resource allocation to policy, the gap between government rhetoric and local practice can be very large.

## Foot-notes

1. One might argue that even the installation of the National Curriculum has involved a less significant input of targetted resources than TVEI in that it has been much more concerned with the re-direction of mainstream funding : development costs on both core and foundation curriculum subjects and on the associated testing programmes are unlikely to exceed TVEI expenditure.
2. It is an observable characteristic of this type of funding that it always endeavours to gain a wider response and level of activity than it is actually paying for: further evidence of this tendency will be found in the following chapters.
3. Recent suggestions from the Secretary of State that teachers' salaries should be related to the performance of their pupils on measures such as examination and test results and truancy rates may indicate that 'outcomes' thinking is making a comeback. There is also growing interest within the FE sector (and from the NCVQ) in the notion of funding outcomes (ie qualifications attained).
4. See Weiler (1983) and Harland (1988) on the contribution of 'experimentation' to the legitimization of policy. Presenting new policy initiatives as pilots or experiments can serve to remove them from the realm of controversy. The lessons 'learned' can be presented as the object of scientific investigation rather than ideologically driven policy.
5. These observations are based on first hand experience of 6 planning dialogues in 3 LEAs, and on corroborating conversations with other local evaluators.
6. I vividly recall the shock in one LEA when an MSC auditor wanted personally to count the micro-computers purchased for each school; and again when the decision to re-organise the TVEI offices resulted in the purchase of an extra £100 worth of carpet and drew furious protests from the MSC because it was not in the original accommodation budget. Such trivia, together with the pressures created by making returns of quantitative data, have provoked surprise, frustration, and even laughter.
7. During my own evaluation work, it seemed that the relationship which developed between an MSC Adviser and a project co-ordinator could be ambivalent. While the hierarchical and contingent relationship did not vanish, both parties appeared to appreciate their mutual dependence. In some sense, both had become marginal people : the adviser had broken away from his roots in the educational mainstream and needed to feel that he was not now disowned by the professional world; while the co-ordinator, who was now working to an authority outside the normal LEA and DES channels and might thus be seen as some-one with divided loyalties, also needed reinforcement.
8. McCabe's account reflects my own experience with uncanny accuracy.
9. Later moves to "revise" the Technology orders do not invalidate this point.
10. However, the proviso has to be made that the quantity of the debate is not to be confused with its quality; and an orchestrated debate on themes generated elsewhere may in fact demonstrate a significant and ultimately damaging shift in the concept of teacher professionalism (Harland 1987b).

## THE CASE OF INSET

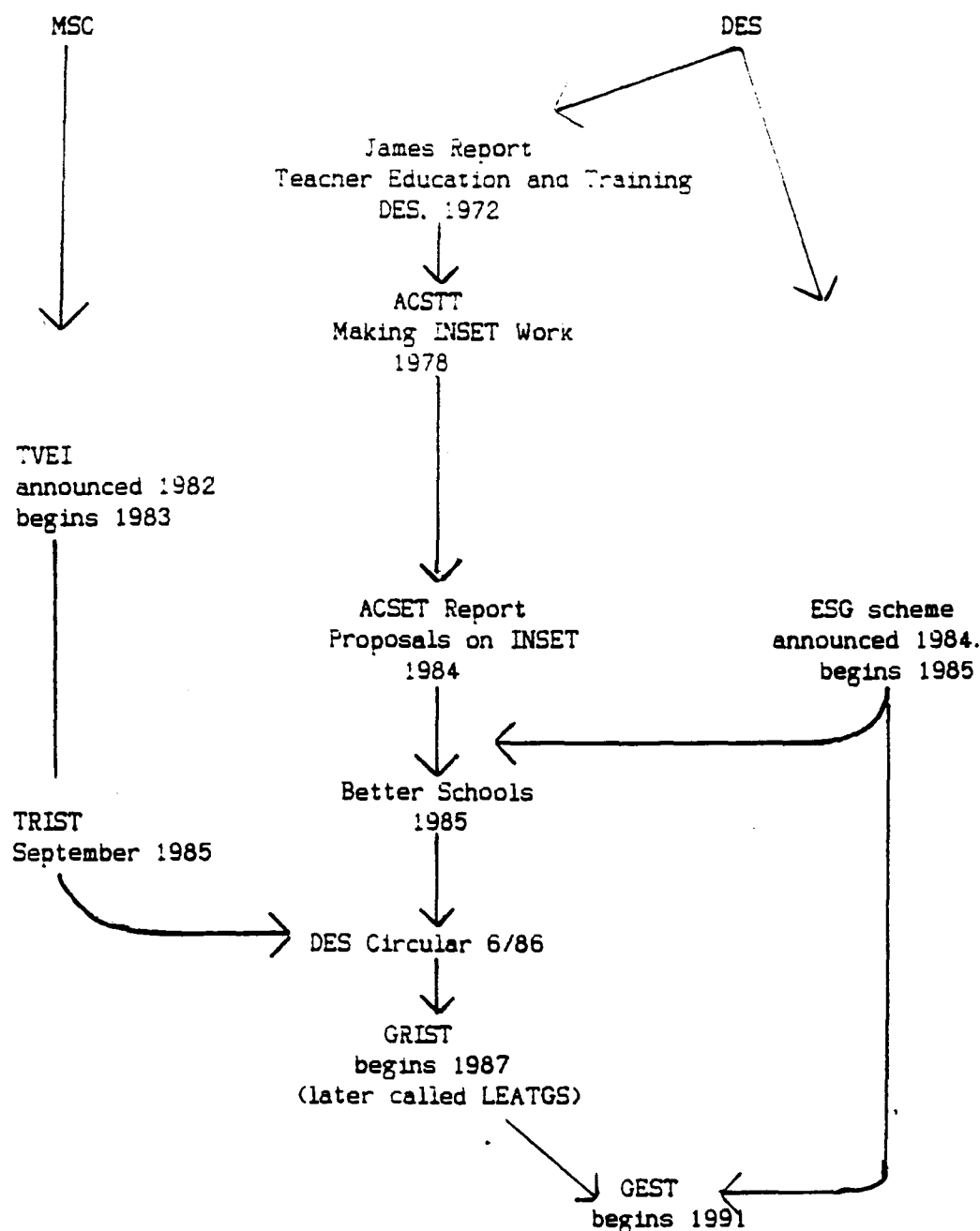
### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter traces recent developments in the in-service education and training of teachers : it will attempt to demonstrate how an emerging policy was realised, and its particular character determined, by the adoption of a funding strategy which reflects very closely the model employed within TVEI. The discussion here will be structured in the same way as in the previous chapter, using the section headings of criteria, bid, and so forth. At the end of each section, there is a reference back to the 'key characteristics' identified in the analysis of TVEI. The chapter concludes with a discussion which also follows the headings in the conclusion to the last chapter. There is however a distinction between the two chapters : in the case of TVEI, the model was explored through material derived largely from evaluation and experience in the field, whereas in this chapter, because of the paucity of other material, the argument is based to a greater extent on documentary analysis.

It is beyond the scope of this study to give a comprehensive account of developments in in-service education (INSET) or of the debate, political and professional, from which they have emerged. However, a brief attempt must be made to sketch in the background and to show the roots of the new strategies. Figure 6 (overleaf) attempts to summarise some of the discussion which follows.

We can begin the account by referring to the James Report (DES,1972b). This report offered a model of INSET which sought to "reflect and enhance the status and the independence of the teaching profession and of the institutions in which teachers are educated and trained". It made ambitious proposals for regular teacher release for further study and training which were probably over-optimistic even in the years preceding the oil crisis of 1974. But nevertheless the arguments offered in the report appeared to legitimise the concept of advanced education for teachers (and not merely training intended to up-date their skills). Moreover, it appeared to favour the growing popularity among teachers of extended study leading to formal qualifications such as Diplomas and Masters' degrees.

Figure 6  
THE LINEAGE OF THE LOCAL EDUCATION TRAINING GRANT SCHEME (LEATGS)



#### Glossary

ACSET	Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers
ACSTT	Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers
ESG	Education Support Grants
GEST	Grants for Education Support and Training
GRIST	Grant Related In-service Training
LEATGS	Local Education Authority Training Grants Scheme
TRIST	TVEI Related In-service Training
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

To understand the significance of this stand - and to appreciate the degree to which the DES sought to transform INSET in the late eighties - it is important to recall the existing pattern of advanced education and training for teachers. At that time, when there were substantial changes going on in the schools coupled with an increasing feeling that the promise of the 1944 Education Act had not been fulfilled, many teachers appeared (and felt themselves) to enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy in relation to both the organisation and the curriculum of their schools. This encouraged an increasing number to take an interest in education at a conceptual, and not merely a practical, level. In response to this demand there was a rapid expansion of advanced courses for teachers within university departments of education and, later, polytechnics and colleges of education. As both cause and effect of this growing interest, the same period saw an equally rapid and exciting growth in the range of research and scholarship within educational studies, with notable advances in such fields as educational sociology, and curriculum studies.

Thus, from the mid sixties, a significant number of teachers were seeking the kind of advanced education which gave them access to debates about education and which, by implication, lay beyond the management of their own class-rooms and the updating of their own teaching specialisms. However, for the most part these teachers were self-selected, and their objectives were almost invariably tied to their personal preferences, interests and ambitions. The education system was expanding rapidly and it was an observable fact that many of those who improved their academic qualifications were subsequently promoted. Many had enjoyed up to a year's full-time study, paid for through an "uncapped" pooling system whereby each LEA contributed an equal amount to a central DES fund but could claim from it for the costs of teacher release in accordance with the number of secondments they were prepared to offer. The operation of this system was clearly inequitable and in many cases the number and purpose of the secondments did not appear to be part of any kind of coherent LEA policy. Moreover, apart from discrepancies in the extent to which LEAs were interested in encouraging teachers to follow courses, there was also a general tendency "to increase the number of secondees not just to improve the quality of the profession but to use it as a means to off-set the salary bill caused by falling rolls, and to supplement the numerical strength of advisory teams" (Goddard 1989). The overall picture was thus characterised by a lack of any thought about the overall needs of the system and driven by personal factors in a wholly unco-ordinated manner.

From the mid-seventies there was increasing criticism of school standards and hence of teacher effectiveness. It was therefore not surprising that the arbitrary nature of the existing system of INSET came under attack. But it can also be argued that the concern to reform in-service education and training was as much a response to a changing context as to an inadequate practice. In the first place, the topic of training and re-training had become a central pre-occupation in most forms of employment, and it is now hard to remember how much this was a reversal of previous attitudes and practice in industry, commerce and the professions. The formalization and systematization of INSET is therefore partly to be understood in this wider context. Second, and particularly in the eighties, government was laying increasingly specific requirements upon teachers. In situations where teachers have a considerable degree of autonomy, it may be that further education and training are most naturally geared to up-grading overall professionalism ; but where the teaching task is specified in greater and greater detail, training requirements themselves become more specific. Third, policy in any one area is formulated in the shadow of other specific actions or general objectives. In the eighties, the Conservative government endeavoured to rein back the powers of local authorities, partly in order to restrain public expenditure, but also to prevent the subversion of national policies by local actions : the abrogation of INSET policy to the centre can be seen as a brick in this wall.

Returning to the developments mapped in Figure 6, we should note the importance of the ACSTT report, Making INSET Work (DES, 1978a), which argued strongly that INSET should be rationalized and planned in a manner which recognised the needs of the institution alongside those of the individual. By 1984, the reconstituted committee, ACSET, was taking an even more explicitly managerial tone when it argued for an emphasis within institutions on the identification of needs, for more systematic feedback of lessons learned during INSET, for the training of key personnel for their specific responsibilities, and for a more careful evaluation of the effects of training on teaching and learning (DES, 1984a). To achieve this the committee proposed that each school should be required to make an annual submission to the LEA which the authority would then reconcile with "regional and national developments". It was proposed that LEAs should receive general grant for this purpose, possibly at the rate of 5% of the teachers' salary bill, over which they would exercise their own discretion. The report also recommended the abolition of the pooling arrangements ; and it suggested that short courses should be paid for "at cost" so that LEAs would be in a position to gauge "value for money" and therefore the relative costs of different types of provision.



With the publication of Better Schools (DES,1985a), the government announced a total re-structuring of arrangements for the funding and regulation of INSET. Although the ACSET objectives were clearly reflected in the new policy proposals, there had been some significant transformations. For a start, the DES expressed satisfaction with the success of its small scale initiative of 1983-84, the In-service Teacher Training Grants Scheme, under which it had offered limited funding for specified INSET activities. From this experience it had learned two lessons : first, that it is highly effective and perfectly possible to target training on the government's policy priorities ; and second, that a high level of control can be maintained through the mechanisms of categorical funding. In Better Schools a new policy was accordingly set out. The DES accepted the ACSET arguments for coherence, and the balancing of institutional need against wider priorities ; but from 1987 it was proposed to switch to specific rather than general grant in order that LEA INSET programmes should be subject to the oversight, guidance and approval of the DES.

Better Schools justified this move on the grounds of

*the increasing demands which the government's policies for the schools will make on the teachers'*

- *practical teaching skills;*
- *breadth and depth of subject knowledge;*
- *knowledge of and skills in assessment.*

And the conclusion drawn is that

*Extensive in-service training will be needed to equip teachers to respond to these demands.*

*(DES, 1985a, para 172).*

The enactment of the Education Reform Act in 1988 only served to increase the force of this argument.

After the publication of Better Schools, the DES moved swiftly to implement the new arrangements. A position paper was issued during the summer of 1985, a draft circular in early 1986, and finally a formal Circular (DES, 6/86) in August inviting LEAs to bid for funds under the new scheme for the financial year 1987-1988.

The line of action from the ACSET report of 1984 to the introduction of the new scheme in April 1987 did not, however, occur in a vacuum. The TVEI was, as we have seen, announced at the end of 1982, and launched in 1983; also in 1983, the DES introduced its small specific grant scheme for a few categories of in-service training

(Circular 3/83); and in the following year it announced the Education Support Grants scheme which, by offering subsidy at 70% for specified activities, aimed "to encourage local education authorities to re-deploy a limited amount of expenditure into activities which appear to the Secretary of State to be of particular importance" (DES, Education (Grants and Awards) Act, 1984). Moreover the DES appears to have been impatient to experiment with specific grant for INSET and accordingly diverted £25m from the general education budget for a programme which became known as the TVEI-Related In-Service Training Scheme (TRIST) and was administered for the department by the MSC. Under this latter scheme, a letter to chief education officers dated April 1985 invited LEAs to submit proposals to the MSC within eight weeks for new or additional in-service training and professional development programmes which related in some loose way with the objectives of TVEI. The Senior Chief Inspector, responsible at that time for teacher training, has made no secret of the fact that TRIST was seen as a dummy run for the subsequent Grant Related Inservice Training scheme (GRIST), later re-christened the Local Education Authority Training Grant Scheme (LEATGS). The outcome of this move was that, by using the MSC for the pilot programme, the DES inherited the full apparatus of categorical funding.

The adoption of this strategy was open and explicit. In the House of Commons debate on the 1986 Education (No 2) Act, the Secretary of State said

*Every curriculum improvement needs appropriate in-service training. To meet all of these needs effectively, a sharper financial mechanism is required. The Secretary of State does not at present have financial powers which match his many statutory responsibilities. There is an imbalance here. That is why the Bill proposes ... that in-service training should generally be financed through a new specific grant.*

*(Hansard, June 1986)*

Thus, we find the new INSET policy embedded within the structures of the education system through the adoption of a particular funding strategy : it will therefore be appropriate to interrogate its practice to see how well it fits the model already proposed in previous chapters.

The discussion which follows will deal mainly with the four financial years in which the scheme operated : from April 1991 LEATGS and the ESG scheme were combined into a new Grants for Education Support and Training Scheme (GEST - draft Circular, DES 1990) to which reference will be made only to indicate how the DES has sought to apply the lessons learned.

## 6.2 Criteria

The criteria to which each authority had to work were more complex for LEATGS than for TVEI, though not necessarily harder to meet. They have consisted of the "Aims of the Scheme" ; the "objectives" spelt out for each year; the specific instructions within the annual circulars as to the issues, feedback and planning strategies to be included in each proposal; and the changing list of national priorities, announced on a yearly basis. Together these elements constituted the "criteria" (though the term itself was not explicitly used) which authorities had to recognise and meet in the course of preparing their proposals. Each of these elements will be considered separately in this section, but first it is worth noting that in a system where annual submissions are required (unlike TVEI which offered funding for a period of five years), there is much more opportunity for criteria to be changed from year to year. However, the corollary of this is that they tend to be more explicit and therefore less subject to unarticulated evolution and shifting interpretation.

The aims of LEATGS remained more or less constant over the years between 1986 and 1990. Quoting from Circular 5/88, they were

*.... to support in-service training so as :*

- to promote the professional development of teachers ...*
- to promote more systematic and purposeful planning of in-service training ...*
- to encourage more effective management of the teacher force ...*
- to encourage training to meet selected needs which are accorded national priority.*

*(DES, 1988)*

Within these aims, the broad objectives in each successive year focused more and more specifically on teacher skills in relation to government requirements. Whereas Circular 9/87 spoke of "the development of local education authorities' in-service training programmes and ... arrangements for managing them", and Circular 5/88 of "the effective introduction of the National Curriculum", Circular 20/89 indicated that the DES wished "to ensure that teachers ... are sufficiently well trained to secure the effective introduction and implementation of the Government's policies to improve the quality of education", policies which included assessment arrangements, teacher appraisal, schemes for licensed and articulated teachers, and the management of pupil behaviour. The draft Circular of July 1990 which set out the proposals for the new

GEST scheme, spoke of ensuring that teachers are "properly prepared for the reforms". The tone of these objectives thus became increasingly prescriptive and pre-emptive.

Successive Circulars gave specific instructions about the matters to which LEAs should attend in preparing their proposals, either in terms of reporting on progress in terms of their management of INSET. For example, 9/87 asked for reports on progress in devising new ways of managing INSET (para 3), and 5/88 included a ten item questionnaire on the same theme. Circular 5/88 (para 7) also demanded that details of complementary activities funded through either TVEI or ESGs should be noted in the submission. Circular 20/89 (para 5) told LEAs to include 3 out of the 5 "Baker" days into the formal in-service plans, and moreover asked that bids should show the implications of a final allocation of plus or minus 15%.

Each Circular included information on the factors which the Secretary of State proposed to take into account in determining the final maxima for grant-aided expenditure for each authority. The role of indicative allowances will be discussed in the next section : the immediate point is to suggest that the Circulars consistently encouraged LEAs to equate favourable resource decisions with demonstrated success in meeting DES criteria.

A central feature of the scheme in its first four years was the distinction made between national priority areas (NPAs) and local priority areas (LPAs). From the beginning NPAs were supported at a higher rate of grant than LPAs : 70% for NPAs (dropping to 65% in 1990-91) as compared to 50% for LPAs. Moreover the percentage reserved for NPAs within the total funds available increased from 35% in 1987-88 to 37.1%, 39.3% and 56.9% in the following years (McBride, 1989). (In the revised scheme for 1991-92, when ESGs and LEATGS were brought together, the provision for LPAs vanished altogether and all support was directed towards centrally identified activities.) The specification of NPAs and the year-on-year changes in the list were therefore a central element in the criteria to which LEA proposals had to attend.

NPAs have covered training in specific subjects or activities such as maths and science, assessment and management training; the changeover to GCSE; local financial management in schools and colleges; and the introduction of the national curriculum. They have included health education and the teaching of adult literacy and basic skills. They have also provided for the training of special needs teachers, youth and community workers and educational psychologists. The number of activities identified

as NPAs varied between 17 and 24 in any one year. Overall, a total of 44 NPAs were nominated over four years. But of these, only support for the training of youth workers and educational psychologists and for developments within FE provision for students with special needs appeared in every year's list. Other priorities have come and gone over the period, and some, such as management training for senior teachers and technological up-dating for FE lecturers have disappeared only to make a later come-back. (All information from Glickman and Dale, 1990.) In each year, the DES also indicated the maximum level of expenditure it was prepared to support for each of the NPAs.

Overall it is clear that, even without formal criteria, LEAs were left in no doubt that their proposals had to be in line with the blue-print provided by the DES. We shall see later that meeting the criteria could still leave an LEA with plenty of room to manoeuvre. However, in exercising these liberties, authorities sometimes chose to forget that they could roam only within the designated territory.

How does the operation of 'criteria' within LEATGS compare with that in TVEI? Although it is clear that, as for TVEI, the criteria were worked out after the policy decision about INSET funding was made, there was little attempt to consult externally as to what they might contain, nor were there windows of opportunity for LEAs and other interested parties to influence the overall direction. The all-inclusive nature of LEATGS meant that the operational criteria were a much blunter instrument than in TVEI and the programme proved far more co-ercive, with less emphasis on competition and none on volunteering. Flexibility was visible only where it suited the evolving agenda of the DES. As to values, it is self-evident that LEA co-ordinators were obliged to put together a programme which reflected DES criteria and thus they at least appeared to be advocates of the DES-formulated priorities. We must therefore conclude that the role of criteria is contingent upon other aspects of categorically-funded programmes.

### **6.3 Bid**

To understand how far the criteria constrained LEAs in formulating their proposals, it is necessary to look at the bidding process itself.

As in TVEI, it has often been claimed that the preparation of bids under the new INSET arrangements was subject to undue time pressure. With the experimental

TRIST scheme this was certainly the case. The scheme was announced in May and authorities had eight weeks in which to submit their plans. There is some useful commentary on their response in Evans (1990) who was responsible for the national evaluation of TRIST. She writes that though some officers and advisers were shaken out of their "usual, sometimes pedestrian, routines, ... more often the enforced pace was seen as creating fundamental problems" (p109). Interestingly, however, she comments that those authorities which seemed to have fewest problems in concluding their contracts with the MSC, often encountered greater difficulties at the implementation stage than those who had engaged in a more protracted discussion and re-formulation of their plans.

In another parallel with TVEI, the short time-scale allowed for submission enabled some LEA officers to "by-pass their own bureaucracy" and "most LEAs' plans were devised by a small group of key officials". Thus, "a scheme designed to enable LEAs to plan for the systematic management of INSET had an in-built pressure to cut corners and respond in an *ad hoc* manner" (op cit, p110). One effect of this was to exclude significant groups such as advisers from the consultation process. This tension seems to be a problem for any policy process which involves bidding. Even where the explicit purpose is to encourage more participative strategies (what one LEA inspector in the Evans study called the "imposed democratic model"), the effect of time pressure can produce the very opposite results from those intended.

It might be thought that problems of the kind described in the preceding paragraphs would be ironed out after the early stages of the scheme. However, the Scrutiny Report prepared for the DES in late 1989 under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Efficiency Unit (Glickman and Dale, 1990) draws attention to continuing problems related to timing. Notification of indicative allowances were arriving in August and bids were required in late September ; notification of final allocations arrived at the end of December. One authority enquired of the scrutineers "Is there an obsession at the DES for sending information to authorities just before major holidays ?". A more substantive complaint concerned the fact that, for the most part, there was no guarantee that activities named as NPAs would be renewed for the following year. The authors of the report observe that

*many LEAs, conscious of the annual nature of the schemes and because of their experience of the grant mechanisms, remain unsure as to whether activities will continue as might have been originally indicated. This has hindered planning and good management. Uncertainty and contingency planning have not helped LEAs, nor the DES, secure maximum value for money.*

*(Glickman and Dale, 1990, para 90)*

A major parameter for the bidding process is obviously the question of the total funds available and the conditions which apply to the distribution of that money across various activities. Unlike TVEI and, to a lesser extent, the ESG programme, the LEATGS was not competitive. The TRIST programme notified LEAs of "grant ceilings" and LEATGS itself used the term "indicative allowances". For the most part these allowances were calculated on the basis of pupil/teacher numbers. Only in the first year (1987-88) was any allowance made for historic costs to reflect previous levels of spending on INSET.

While this shift to pre-determined levels of grant represents a variation in the model of categorical funding outlined in this thesis, it is nonetheless a development to be expected when a funding body seeks to implement a policy across the system rather than to proceed via experiment and example. Given that part of the purpose behind the new INSET arrangements was a levelling of LEA provision, it is not surprising that an overall reduction for some occurred. There are three comments to make on this shift. First, TVEI itself shifted from competitive bidding to something very much akin to indicative allowances as it became clear that all LEAs could expect to join the pilot phase and then participate in the extension, subject only to a satisfactory proposal. Second, the effect of the shift made no substantive change to the experience of categorical funding for it had little impact on the other elements in the contracting process. And third, as in the case of many other social and educational policies, it would have been unacceptable to suggest that some LEAs would get less or no support for INSET when, for example, the requirements of the Education Reform Act fell upon them all.

The global allowance for LPAs stood at £130m over the first three years of the scheme and then fell to £92.4m in 1990-91; as noted in the previous section, LPAs therefore accounted for a diminishing percentage of the total, but also declined in real terms due to inflationary factors. LEAs therefore had the task of preparing their bids with the DES indicative allowances in mind. They also had to calculate how much expenditure from within their own resources would be needed to "trigger" the DES support. This did not, however, represent a ceiling on their total INSET expenditure, but merely "the limits up to which the Secretary of State will contribute grant under this scheme" (letter to LEAs, dated 19.12.86).

The indicative allowance did not provide LEAs with a simple global sum for NPAs and another for LPAs. The NPA allowance was notified broken down into indicated

totals for each priority area. An important element in the bidding process was therefore the need to make the proposal "fit" the sums indicated. During the four years of the LEATGS scheme these sums could be adjusted by providing for additional expenditure on NPAs from within the LPA allowance although such supplementary expenditure was supported only at the lower rate. Movement of funds in the other direction, from NPAs to LPAs, was not allowed. Expenditure on particular NPAs could also be increased by virement between headings. Such virement was restricted to 10% of the indicated maxima unless exceptional permission was sought from the Secretary of State. Each year there was a changing list of NPAs from which virement was not permitted.

The preparation of bids was therefore shaped, inter alia, by the balance between NPAs and LPAs and by the possibility of virement between headings. With the advent of GEST for 1991-92, both these framing factors were removed, decisions which throw an interesting light on the mechanics of categorical funding. In the first place the DES determined to withdraw provision for LPAs entirely despite the recommendations of the Scrutiny Report. The authors of that report had concluded that although

*a large discretionary element appears at odds with the concept of specific grants ....., this element of flexibility has proved of significant value (to LEAs) and has helped efficiency.*

*(Glickman, 1990, para 79-80)*

However, in the draft circular of 20 July 1990 it was said that

*The Secretary of State has reviewed whether the LPA should continue ..... Given the range of national priorities needing support through the GEST programme, and the convergence of national and local training needs following the ERA, he has concluded that it should not.*

*(DES, 1990, para 20)*

Simultaneously, the DES decided to restrict virement to the movement of funds between sub-headings of expenditure within the allocations for separate activities. The draft circular stated

*virement has ... caused widespread problems in auditing grant claims, causing delays in the submission of audit certificates. It has also distorted the levels of support for individual LEATGS activities as determined by the Secretary of State. (op cit, para 28)*

The implications of these two changes are clear, for both represent a re-inforcement and an extension of central control over INSET activities funded under the scheme. As such, they demonstrate the effectiveness of categorical funding in ensuring that the



intentions of the sponsors are not distorted at the point of delivery. Bids are thus even more firmly tied down to the criteria of the particular programme.

In conclusion, there would seem to be very many similarities between the bid phase in both TVEI and LEATGS. The over-riding significance of resources which demonstrates LEA dependency upon DES grant in whatever form it is offered ; the tight time-scales and the consequent enclosure of the planning process ; the demand from the sponsoring agency to see visible changes (for example, in management practices) ; the possibility of local variation within clear parameters ; and the control implications of extended negotiations are all apparent : all these are just as much features of LEATGS as of TVEI.

#### **6.4 Contract**

In relation to TVEI, it has been argued that contract can be seen either as an event, a specific document, or alternatively as a symbol of a continuing relationship. Much the same is true of 'contracts' within LEATGS.

Here, however, there seems little need to argue whether the contract can or has been enforced or even cancelled, whether it is essentially a "myth", or whether it is used by local officials to keep the system moving forward. This is because, rather than employ the language of contract, the DES apparently preferred to talk about indicative allowances, submissions, letters of approval and additional requirements. However, it was also partly because the scheme was always intended to be inclusive ; LEAs might grumble (as some did when they discovered that historic costs would be rapidly discounted) but it was always assumed that none could or would fail to 'co-operate'.

Furthermore, we cannot ignore the fact that, even though the compliance of LEAs was apparently assured by a shift in funding arrangements over which they had no influence, they were not without power within the bargaining process. Their position *vis-a-vis* the DES is well explained by Archer's dependency theory (Archer, 1981) : the dependent partner in this case certainly held reserves of expertise and of an even more crucial commodity, the capacity to comply and even support the new programme, which was crucially important to the ultimate success of the programme.

With good reason, therefore, the DES wanted to pass from the stage of initiative to the stage of normal practice as quickly and smoothly as possible. Talk of contracts, to

be won and possibly to be lost, might have increased tension and risked re-opening the whole issue of INSET on a year by year basis. Instead the department went for a rule-governed scheme with control over programme content, virement, planning cycles, management practices, monitoring, and so forth, which implied rather than stated a contractual relationship. Funding is provided in exchange for the delivery of an agreed programme within limits and under conditions specified by the sponsor. And that is contract in all but name.

Once again, it is reasonable to conclude that the operation of contract in LEATGS is broadly similar to its role within TVEI. Here too, it is the contractual relationship - the obligation to deliver a specified programme in return for the necessary resources - which is more important than the contract itself ; and once more, there is a clear emphasis on outcomes, even where those outcomes are concerned with demonstrable changes in process. And here too, it is evident that if LEAs are to meet the requirements of the contract, they are likely to emphasise their obligations to the DES in order to enforce compliance within their own sub-systems.

## **6.5 Monitoring**

Monitoring and, for that matter evaluation, has been a much less clear-cut and coherent area in the LEATGS scheme than in TVEI. This is scarcely surprising for three reasons : first of all, the DES was much less experienced than the MSC in the establishment and then the subsequent management of a programme funded by specific grant and shaped in detail by its own criteria ; second, it was not aiming for a pilot scheme but rather for the incorporation of all INSET into a new pattern ; and third, unlike the MSC, it did not seek to set up a temporary system complete with Regional Advisers, local project managers, identified post-holders in schools and colleges, and a network of evaluators, but rather it was aiming for a re-definition of roles and responsibilities within existing structures.

Evidence about the role of monitoring within the LEATGS scheme we have evidence which derives from the two Notes on monitoring and evaluation issued by the DES to LEAs in November 1987 and in January 1989; from the responses of LEAs to formal enquiries concerning their INSET programmes, both in their original form and also as summarised by the department; from HMI reports; and, in various forms, from the comments provided by LEAs on their experience of the scheme. We also have the

evidence of administrative practice itself within which we can discern DES monitoring processes.

The overall message of all this evidence is that the tasks of monitoring and evaluation have been areas of some perplexity and confusion. The DES has held conferences for INSET coordinators, regional networks of LEAs have done the same, and INSET programmes themselves have in many instances included formal training for school and LEA staff. Nevertheless there have been many complaints about the over-accumulation of undigestible data and many concerns expressed about the difficulty of isolating and evaluating the ultimate impact of training on pupil learning. There has also been a tendency to draw only very indistinct lines between monitoring and evaluation. There is therefore some inevitable overlap between this section on monitoring and the next on evaluation. Here I shall therefore emphasise those aspects of the whole which relate to the task of monitoring geared to the enforcement of contract. The manner in which the DES promoted, and required LEAs to engage in, both monitoring and evaluation was in itself a significant part of the supervisory role legitimised by the fact of contract ; it must therefore not be ignored.

There have been two distinct thrusts in the guidelines offered by the DES to LEAs. One was concerned with informing authorities about the department's own intentions concerning monitoring and evaluation; the other with giving advice as to how LEAs were to conduct their own monitoring and evaluation as required under the terms of LEATGS (DES 1986b, paras 23-26). But in both the DES appeared to use the terms "monitoring" and "evaluation" loosely, often interchangeably, and usually linked together like a pair of Siamese twins.

In the Note of November 1987 the DES offered (in the same paragraph) both informal and formal definitions in order to distinguish between the two. The informal version reads :

*In this note "monitoring" denotes the process of establishing what you are getting and whether it is what you wanted; "evaluation" denotes the process of establishing what good it is doing, and whether you were right to want it.*

But immediately there follows the formal definition from which the rather dangerous "whether" questions have already vanished; and several other themes, such as relating outcomes to intentions, seem to change places:

*i. Monitoring seeks to identify and quantify the outcomes - intended and unintended - of training programmes and the underlying decision-making procedures, and the inputs of human, material and financial resources relating one to the other.*

*ii. Evaluation seeks to establish the value of the outcomes, positive and negative. It seeks to explain relationships between inputs and outcomes, and compare outcomes with initial plans and objectives.*

*(DES, 1987c, para 4)*

Not surprisingly the Note of January 1989 remarks that "a number of LEAs are still unclear..." and "there appears to be some confusion about the definition of these terms"! There then follows another attempt.

*i. Monitoring is concerned with establishing whether training programmes and the underlying decision making procedures are taking effect and developing as planned;*

*ii. Evaluation is concerned with establishing the quality and effectiveness of training and the effects of training on the quality of teaching and learning.*

*(DES, 1989a, para 7)*

To this reader there still appears to be a confusion, not least because the word "effect" is used in three different senses: under monitoring we see "taking effect" in the sense of "happening according to plan", whereas under evaluation we have "effectiveness" in the sense of efficiency and "effects" in the sense of impact.

This analysis demonstrates the elusiveness of the two concepts and yet at the same time their significance within contractual relationships. The persistence with which the DES insisted that LEAs respond to the department's monitoring and evaluation demands, and also meet their own responsibilities in this area, speak strongly to their significance in the enforcement of contract; and also to the contribution of self-reporting in a situation where the contractor cannot hope to supervise in great detail from within his own resources.

We need therefore to attend to the focus and objects of monitoring and evaluation rather than to the techniques proposed or even the confusions created. For as Glickman, writing from inside the DES, says

*DES requirements may well have proved helpful to LEAs in defining the questions which they and their institutions should be asking themselves.*

*(Glickman and Dale, 1990, para 128)*

The 1987 Note, for example, was crucially concerned with shaping "What to monitor and evaluate". Here, it was said,

*information and judgement are needed ... on the following main areas of activity :*

- 1. the systems by which training is managed;*
- 2. the training provided; and*
- 3. the effects of the training on teaching and on pupils' learning.*

*(DES, 1987c, para 8, my emphasis)*

Thereafter, paragraphs 10 and 14 made it clear that the DES intended to concentrate its own activities on the first two areas. It was indicated (and it did happen) that in each year's submission to the DES, LEAs would be required to report on their "progress against the targets for improvements in management systems ... set out in the previous year's proposals" (para 10). Within this, "the handling of the identification of training needs and their subsequent ranking" is described as an aspect of crucial importance (para 11). Paragraph 14 indicated that the DES would require statistical data on expenditure, and on volumes of training days and people trained.

The conclusion we might legitimately draw from this brief account of DES 'advice' is that the contractual framework allowed the DES to intervene directly not only in the content of INSET programmes but also in the way the whole operation was managed by the LEAs. From the Notes and from the annual Circulars we can deduce that, while the DES did not assume or require uniformity of practice among LEAs, it clearly intended to impose management practices which were consistent with and supportive of DES policy intentions rather than local, possibly idiosyncratic, preferences. The metaphor of 'partnership' is not appropriate here : that of 'principal and agent', which belongs within the rules on contract, is.

For a succinct and somewhat critical account of DES monitoring we can turn to the department's own Scrutiny Report (Glickman and Dale, 1990). The first point to note is that much of what are defined in this thesis as monitoring processes are referred to in the Report as "administrative arrangements". Clearly the way in which LEATGS and other similar programmes are run on a day to day basis can itself be designed to check on compliance and the adequate fulfilment of contract.

Glickman found a division of functions within the DES which had not aided "the efficiency and effectiveness of the scheme". While policy divisions were largely responsible for determining the shape of the LEATGS offer, particularly in relation to the choice of NPAs, it was the Teacher Training Division which handled the financial arrangements and was responsible for monitoring the scheme as a whole. Thus

*Largely in the absence of indications from policy divisions as to the sort of information they would like to see..., Teacher Training Division has continued with collection of considerable data covering training activities. We have found little evidence that the information collected has been of use to policy divisions nor indeed that it has been used. The suspicion which LEAs have that the aggregates of training data which they provide is collected for its own sake is, in our view, largely confirmed.*

*(Glickman and Dale, 1990, para 108)*

The Report records that most LEAs in their written evidence had "complained about the administrative burden of LEATGS"; one LEA wrote

*Some of the forms which LEA officers are required to submit have been unrealistic, for example the very detailed breakdown in LEATGS 3 in March 1989 (eg how many days, people, £s, devoted to training of special school teachers on the cross-curricular theme of industry!).*  
*(para 118)*

Another LEA complained that requests had been made for similar data on several occasions :

*... It is not clear to us why this amount of data is required and it would be helpful to find out how this data is used and what conclusions are drawn from it.*  
*(para 119)*

Glickman confirms that these anxieties are justified. After advancing no fewer than five reasons why such prolific detail is "inappropriate", the Report concludes

*We have found no evidence that the data collected has been used widely within the Department to inform decision making .... The data is no longer used to inform Ministers and senior officials about the working of the scheme in any way that appears constructive. (But) the collection of comprehensive data may well have been desirable when the LEATGS was first established. The scheme was designed to change the way in-service training was approached and managed ..... management systems are now installed and running effectively in most LEAs.*  
*(para 128 - 130)*

It was therefore suggested that in future the DES should only monitor closely those LEAs "about whose INSET provision it has concerns".

This comment from within the DES clearly demonstrates that the collection of data, at least during the early stages of a programme, has an importance in itself. LEA officers may have complained that little use was being made of the copious information which they were expected to send to the DES; but the fact that it was required, that LEAs had no option but to concur, and that it appeared to focus on what to the

department were the strategic factors in the new scheme, re-inforced the new contractual relationships within which INSET was now framed.

How then does the monitoring process within LEATGS compare with that of TVEI? There are clearly significant differences. In Chapter 5 I suggested that there were five aspects to the monitoring process,. Most of these appear in only a modified form in LEATGS. The annual planning dialogue of TVEI becomes transmuted into an exchange of Circulars, letters, pro-formas and other documents between the LEA and a distant bureaucracy. Local steering groups were set up in many LEAs but without the structured formality and the ex-officio representation of the funding department which marked TVEI. Financial and non-financial returns indeed abounded and even the DES owed to their weight and their diminishing utility. HMI were less effective in terms of influencing policy implementation than the Regional Advisers of the TVEI system not only because they had to spread themselves more thinly, but also because they could not see themselves purely as servants of the scheme. And finally, as we shall see in the next section, the role and function of evaluation has been haphazard and confused. Missing too has been the intense public scrutiny - from politicians, employers, press, educationalists from home and abroad - which marked TVEI, kept the scheme in the public eye, thereby increased its visibility to the department. INSET is seen as a routine, technical, professional matter - not one which attracts general interest, commentary or even (sadly) sustained critique. (1)

Finally, looking back to the analysis of the key characteristics of monitoring in Chapter 5, it seems that in LEATGS as in TVEI it is best to see monitoring as a multi-faceted operation, with many contacts and activities which are not explicitly part of the monitoring process contributing to the capacity of the sponsor to scrutinise the funded programme. Whereas in TVEI there were no doubt more occasions on which the LEA was required to make a public demonstration of the programme, the crucial process in LEATGS has been the annual submission. The framework and procedures of LEATGS were sufficiently pervasive to construct a new discourse around the management and focus of the new INSET programmes.

## 6.6 Evaluation

In the 1989 Note on Monitoring and Evaluation it was claimed that

*For many LEAs the problems of monitoring and evaluation can be directly attributed to lack of precision in defining objectives.*

*(DES, 1989a, para 3)*

The assumption which appears to underlie DES statements is that evaluation must ultimately be concerned with outcomes, particularly in terms of establishing links between training received and observable improvements in teaching and learning. However they appear to have been persuaded that "ultimate" objectives may either be distant or ambivalent as to their origins, and they are therefore much concerned with "intermediate objectives ... which, if accomplished, either consecutively or simultaneously, are believed to lead to or to contribute to the ultimate objectives and which can be more easily evaluated" (para 4 and 5). Objectives, they argue, can be quantifiable and hence subject to "performance measures", but "where outcome or performance is not directly measureable ... a proxy measure or performance indicator" should be used. This, it is said, is in the interests of deriving "ratios for economy, effectiveness and efficiency" (para 13).

This outcome orientation is to be understood as part of the process of accountability at a time when social policy is shaped by party political manoeuvres and electoral time-scales. Government departments are driven to control the activities they initiate by two considerations. The first of these is the "bureaucratic dynamic" (Salter and Tapper, 1981) which not only incorporates the ideology of "economy, effectiveness and efficiency", but also contains an un-stated notion that local and regional bodies are less capable and compliant than government departments and need to be cajoled and controlled. The second is the product of the increasingly frenetic engagement of government in socio-economic policy. The assumption is that the electorate expect emergent 'issues' in the public arena to be reflected in the development of 'policies' which in turn will be rapidly incorporated into 'programmes' capable of demonstrating successful 'outcomes' : and all this, within a time-scale brief enough to demonstrate success within an electoral term.

Over the past decade education at all levels - from the teaching of reading to 5 year olds to the whole structure of vocational education and training - has become a prime focus of government efforts to demonstrate its effectiveness within this cycle of issue-policy-programme-successful outcomes. Thus the DES needs to promote evaluation not only as a characteristic of responsible performance and as a means of shaping the activities of its, sometimes wayward, local 'partners', but above all as a means of providing its political masters with evidence of successful policy outcomes. (A similar argument about the position of civil service managers in relation to the evaluation of TVEI was presented in the previous chapter).



LEAs have evolved a somewhat different approach to evaluation. For most, the practice of evaluation is a relatively recent and initially intimidating concept. TVEI and its associated TRIST programme were for many their first encounter with systematic evaluation as an integral component of educational programmes (albeit that it is now deeply entrenched as something, like equal opportunities, which no self-respecting proposal dares to leave out !). Early LEA responsibilities for evaluation were often discharged with the help of HE specialists who had absorbed and now promoted ideas about "democratic" (MacDonald, 1974) and "illuminative" (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972) evaluation and who believed in teacher research and self-evaluation. Their message was that the most productive (and the least threatening ?) form of evaluation was formative and was orientated to process rather than to outcomes; also that the evaluator's responsibility was as much about facilitating implementation as about judgement. Such approaches naturally encouraged LEAs to think that their own staff should undertake much of the evaluation themselves and the contribution of HE personnel was increasingly switched to training teachers and advisers in the appropriate 'skills', and to generalised consultancy about evaluation strategy. The confidence to take on evaluation at the LEA level was well expressed by the Adviser responsible for INSET in a shire county : "Evaluation is best done at the level of delivery ; the authority funds a .1 secondment for INSET co-ordinators to review their own operations" (interview data).

Moves to in-house, self-evaluation at the local level were re-inforced by developments in the field of school and college management. The work of Bolam (1984) and others in promoting the concept of the "problem-solving school" engaged in self-monitoring and self-renewal, and the growing interest in the notion of school-effectiveness (Rutter et al, 1979; Mortimore et al 1988) encouraged the idea that schools should take responsibility for their own development through a process which began with honest, collegial and largely private self-evaluation. Many senior staff from schools and colleges attended courses, funded under the ESG scheme and under LEATGS itself, which emphasised more open and participative styles of management and stressed the importance of involving all staff in processes of review, evaluation and development (see for example, the GRIDS scheme, McMahon et al, 1984). More recent pressure to formulate School or Institutional Development Plans certainly draws on these ideas; but it is interesting to see how, under the influence of the Education Reform Act, official advice on how to produce such plans is emphasising the significance of outcomes expressed as targets and performance indicators : this can be seen, for example, in the DES sponsored School Development Planning (Hargreaves et al, 1989), and in the current requirements for rolling plans and the pre-specification of

performance indicators which are attached to TVEI Extension funding by the Department of Employment.

It may be that the continuing efforts of the DES to stimulate a more rigorous (as they saw it) approach to evaluation on the part of LEAs are to be explained at least partly by a disjunction between the views of each side. It is also possible that LEAs were actually more sophisticated in their understanding of the issues than the DES was able or willing to credit. Nevertheless the DES continued to urge LEAs to pay greater attention to the evaluation of LEATGS. One strategy for doing this was in the context of the formal letter indicating agreement to the annual submission. In such a letter dated December 1987 to one LEA, for example, it was stated

*In the case of (Zed-shire), the Secretary of State notes that there are a number of evaluation projects in individual institutions in place. He will, however, wish to see in their proposals for 1989/90 that the authority have an overall strategy for evaluation.*

Another device was for the DES to give "notice of its intention to seek further details of how LEAs were managing INSET and how it was being monitored and evaluated". This was done by issuing a set of questions to which answers were to be given on "one side of A4 paper" and submitted with the annual submission. The department declared that it would then follow up these replies with "detailed questions", presumably in those areas where they saw cause for concern. Divisional HMI played their part in this process.

A major exercise of this kind occurred in 1988 and the quotes above come from a paper dated August 1988. The questions posed appear to have anticipated precise replies :

*What intermediate and final objectives has the authority set itself for INSET ?*

*What performance indicators and procedures are used by the Authority to arrive at qualitative and quantitative judgements ?*

- but the replies are often highly generalised, even vague, and apparently designed to lay the department off. Two examples are given below :

*The objectives of (the) INSET programme have been expressed as principles underlying practice because the process of staff development is seen as long-term and continuing.*

*(Zed-shire - reply to DES, September, 1988)*

*It is difficult to state a final object when the process is a continuing one, the aim being to produce as professional a service as possible by making the best use of available resources, a constant improvement in teacher quality and the consequent enrichment of the the learning experience of our pupils .....*

*(Why-borough - reply to DES, September 1988)*

One of these authorities went so far as to mention the "negotiation" of performance indicators with schools that could be incorporated in processes of self-evaluation ; the other avoided the needle words altogether. DES statements around this time suggest that the department felt itself to be nailing down jellies ; perhaps it is not surprising that in the new GEST scheme, specific performance indicators are spelled out for each of the NPAs.

Looking at the findings of evaluation rather than the attempts to shape method, it is apparent that the DES had to rely on responses from individual LEAs to either general or individualised enquiries such as the exercise described above, on quantitative data collected largely for monitoring purposes, and on two reports completed by HMI. It is to these reports that we now turn.

The first HMI report was concerned with the first financial year of LEATGS, 1987-88; it appeared in mid 1989, some three years after the scheme was launched (DES,1989b). The second covered the financial years 1988-90 and was published in mid 1991 (DES, 1991a), some 18 months after the department's own Scrutiny Report (Glickman et al, 1990) had led to the re-shaping of the whole LEATGS programme, including its monitoring and evaluation strategy. These two belated reports represent the only evaluation of LEATGS on a national scale.

The reports can be read on two levels - both as evaluation, and for what they contain on evaluation. As evaluation, they suffer from the predominantly bland style of most HMI reporting, moving towards value judgements about good practice only through occasional, highly condensed and generalised accounts of particular INSET courses and management practices. They certainly fail to produce the kind of quantified data which their civil servant colleagues would have welcomed, though in their first 1989 Report (produced after the second DES Note), it appears that they have some sympathy with the department's preferences :

*Monitoring and evaluation need to be developed to provide indicators of success for INSET and measures of value for money which combine quantitative with qualitative information.*

*(DES, 1989c, para 2.18)*

But what HMI offer is their usual percentage approach to estimating quality. Thus, in the first year of LEATGS we learn that 75% of HE-provided and 90% of LEA-provided INSET was "satisfactory or better"; while in years 2 and 3 the comparable figures were 89% and 84%. This may be thought to suggest that HE providers were getting better and LEAs worse, but one would have to track through the report to deduce why this might be so : the evaluative commentary which could have followed from these figures is missing. Moreover, as usual, the judgements concerning "satisfactory", "good" and "very good" performance are made as *ex cathedra* statements against undisclosed criteria. The effect of this is to deny the reader any chance to engage with the views expressed in a dialectical manner and one is therefore left with the impression that this is a form of rubber-stamping evaluation, which form dictates must be done and of which nobody expects very much.

A sceptic might also suggest that not everything shall be "satisfactory or better", percentage-wise or otherwise. It is interesting to see which problems apparently persisted across the three years covered. Among them we should particularly note the development of effective INSET management, a prime target of DES policy : the 1989 report said that "the management systems in the majority of LEAs visited were largely embryonic" but "as the second year unfolded ... the large majority were clearly moving towards the more systematic management of INSET" (para 3.8) ; however in 1991 we read that "management and provision is satisfactory or better in 60% of LEAs" (para 3iii) - not perhaps an over-whelming advance ! In the early stages, schools lacked the necessary administrative and financial skills to cope with devolved funds and HMI reported that "budgets are not always related to development plans agreed with the LEAs (para 2.7) ; in the second report, HMI say that the "monitoring of schools' expenditure needs to be further improved (para 3iii). Supply cover is a persistent problem (para 2.9 and 3i); so is the lack of adequate follow-up and support for those who have received training (para 3i and iii). The contribution of advisory teachers and inspectors continues to be influenced by role changes which are the product of other, ERA-related, factors (para 3i). However, the perennial problem was that of evaluating the impact of training on pupil learning. In 1989 there was "very little evidence" and "appropriate indicators of change" were needed (para 2.16). By 1991 we read that

*Direct evidence of the effect of INSET on teaching and, by implication, on learning by pupils or students was found in 140 of the 200 institutions where HMI attempted to note the impact of INSET. (para 44)*

- but the reference is brief and HMI have clearly not cracked the nut of providing "outcome" data which links INSET provision to improvements in learning. Yet that is what the department was looking for.

(It is interesting to consider the position in which HMI found themselves over this issue. There is a clear thread concerning the central importance of identifying positive effect of pupil learning running through DES statements from the first Circular 6/86 onwards. This is well traced in Connor (1989) who goes on to describe a substantial amount of work across a number of countries on the problem of evaluating the impact of INSET. While this is not the place to rehearse the arguments in full, it is apparent that attempts to do what the DES was now asking have been tried and have failed over two decades and in many countries. Caution in this area was expressed in the Scrutiny Report :

*.. it is perfectly possible to collect indicators which help to demonstrate the effect of training experiences on teaching ... the effect on pupils' and students' learning is likely only to become apparent after the lifetime of an individual project.*

*(Glickman, 1990, para 143)*

One wonders why the department's professional inspectorate had not so advised them.)

I turn now to what we can learn from these reports about the monitoring and evaluation practices of LEAs - in other words, HMI's views on evaluation. In the 1989 report it was said that this had been a low priority in 1987-88 because LEAs, schools and colleges were uncertain about effective methods (para 7.1). Stress was put on the need for LEAs to provide guidance, models (para 7.4) and specific training (para 7.10) for evaluation. With support from HE and occasional contributions from teachers following award-bearing courses (para 7.7), progress was being made and HMI noted (para 7.9) the helpful influence of the DES Note of November 1987 (DES,1987c). They concluded that there were

*encouraging signs that evaluation is now more widely recognised as part of the INSET process .. (but) what is less clear is the extent to which evaluation ensures that worthwhile ideas are put into practice*

*(DES, 1989b, para 7.14).*

Two years later, HMI write

*Monitoring and evaluation are now given a higher priority by LEAs. Progress has been made but much practice was still unsatisfactory.*

*(DES, 1991a, para 81)*

Again HE input is praised and most of what the report has to say about evaluation is contained in a half page account of co-operation between one shire county and a local HE provider (paras 83-88). To conclude, LEAs are encouraged to follow the example of the DES in commissioning an evaluation of its own programme in the form of the Scrutiny Report (Glickman 1990) because

*Institutions and individuals need to ensure that training is fulfilling their intentions so that time is not wasted in ineffective training sessions.*  
(para 82)

Taken together we can see how the HMI reports appear to articulate with the agenda set out for evaluation in Chapter 4 : to facilitate implementation (evaluation as a tool of management) and to meet the requirements for upward-facing accountability. While I do not suggest that HMI would accept this diminished role for what they would surely see as independent, critical and professional reporting, nevertheless the nature of contract-based projects seems to set bounds on the role of evaluation. As was the case with TVEI, the zero option is not available to the evaluators and thus the potential of evaluation to contribute to educational debate is severely constrained.

Thus what is apparently missing in the LEATGS evaluation strategy is an element of manifestly external evaluation which might have provided an independent assessment of the programme's achievements. The Scrutiny Report states that "the involvement of HMI in the inspection of INSET is the best means of continuous evaluation" (Glickman, 1990, para 142). But HMI do not appear to have demonstrated any independence in this area and they therefore give the impression of presenting, at least partially, an in-house view. The evidence from TVEI suggests that the DES has foregone some of the effectiveness of a categorically funded programme by its uncertain handling of evaluation.

If that is the case, we cannot expect to find in LEATGS evaluation quite the same characteristics as in TVEI. The concern for implementation is clearly there, and so to is the pre-occupation with accountability - from LEA to DES, and presumably from DES to ministers. But if it is indeed true that evaluation proved to be something of a non-event in LEATGS, the explanation may relate to the fact that this was an all-inclusive programme, rather than an exercise in public experimentation.

## 6.7 Replication/Impact

In Chapter 4 alternative scenarios were outlined for this aspect of the categorical funding procedure : one which emphasised the programme as an experiment, a pilot, concerned with a 'research cohort' and best understood as seed money ; the second as "a much more straightforward attempt to produce changes of attitude, priorities and practice in line with the funding agency's policy preferences". From the very beginning the LEATGS programme was designed to encompass the whole of INSET and so clearly has more to do with the second of these scenarios. As the scheme progressed, the intention to shape the full range of in-service activities became steadily more apparent as national priorities expanded and finally, in the revised GEST scheme, totally replaced local ones. The limited experimental phase was represented by the TRIST scheme. With LEATGS, the DES was not aiming to create ripples in the pond, but rather to drain and to re-fill it.

Nevertheless an element of replication persisted. In Chapter 4, I argued that a key feature of the MSC's use of categorical funding has been the capacity to purchase an inordinate amount of influence in relation to the outlay. LEATGS demonstrates similar features. In purely financial terms, within a grant-aided programme LEAs had to invest their own funds in order to trigger DES support, thus curtailing their own freedom of action. But in more qualitative and judgmental terms, we might argue that the experience of the scheme contributed to the changed and changing relationship between central and local authorities in a manner which had a significance beyond INSET programmes. One LEA adviser commented that the LEATGS scheme had created

*a group within the LEA with responsibility to respond to the DES ; we can't just add the latest letter to the in-tray. (Interview ; July 1989)*

The parallel with TVEI is striking.

Inside the DES very similar judgements were being made. One of the main conclusions of the Scrutiny Report was that the experience of LEATGS and the ESGs together demonstrated that

*Grant aided activities have, on the whole, released energy and commitment and promoted beneficial developments in ways quite disproportionate to the expenditure devoted to them. (Glickman, 1990, para 170)*

This Report is also a testimony to the structural and political impact of LEATGS. At a "fundamental level", the scheme represented

*... an assumption of responsibilities by the Secretary of State for the continuing education and training of teachers. In this regard, the LEATGS can be seen as a policy in its own right rather than ... a mechanism to advance policy priorities as they arise. (para 32)*

INSET was no longer "largely unplanned and on an individual, often voluntary, basis"; the Report quotes the first HMI report (DES, 1989b) as "cogent and comprehensive evidence" that LEAs were now managing in-service training and establishing systems to determine needs and to meet them (paras 33 and 34). (The circularity of this mutually affirming relationship between the DES and HMI which persisted at least until the late eighties, is well exemplified by this use of HMI testimony about the impact of DES policy.) According to the Report, "the Department and HMI have invested considerable time and effort in monitoring the establishment of the new INSET management systems", and the Scrutiny team found evidence of progress in the LEAs that they visited (para 35).

Training itself, the Report says, "now aims to meet the needs of individual teachers set within the context of institutional needs". LEATGS had fostered "the move towards school-based training" and a more flexible interpretation of INSET options (paras 36 and 37), though the quality of some is still variable and leaves "its audience dissatisfied" (para 38). A few snags remain in the system : supervision is still "cumbersome", HE expertise is not well harnessed, and there is concern that "LEATGS is not fulfilling its promise of promoting the professional development of teachers". This last point is, it is suggested, "a function of LEATGS needing time to settle down", and also of pressure arising from the short term priorities associated with the implementation of the Education Reform Act (para 39).

Finally, the Report quotes "one body" as saying

*"Our impression of the LEATGS is that it has caused LEA in-service training to change from being haphazard and poorly related with identified needs to being much more systematically managed." (para 40)*

Despite the fact that the Scrutiny Report goes on to recommend an amalgamation of LEATGS and the ESG scheme and contains some criticism of the efficiency of both, the overall tone implies a considerable satisfaction with the transformation of INSET. As far as the department is concerned, the implementation strategy adopted had certainly proved successful in delivering the policy.



Thus far we have looked at the official interpretation of the impact of LEATGS and restricted our account fairly narrowly to the operation of the scheme. Much more might have been written here but in a sense all the previous sections of this chapter have in different ways given evidence of impact, and further elaboration is now unnecessary. There is, however, some point in widening the angle of the lens and looking at the impact of LEATGS on both higher education institutions, providers of most INSET in the days before LEATGS, and also on the evolving concept of teacher professionalism. In doing so, we need to remember that there is a distinction between impact which is intended (results) and impact which is unanticipated (consequences).

To get a closer picture of HE provision, we can draw on research within the Institute of Education's Centre for Higher Education Studies into New Funding Mechanisms in Higher Education, funded by the DES itself (see Chapter 1, foot-note 1). This study was based on 24 case studies of universities and polytechnics and one of its main tasks was to look at the impact of LEATGS on HE in the wider context of Continuing Education.

Seen this way it is clear that LEATGS was part of a broader government strategy to encourage HE to play more of a service role in the provision of post-experience vocational education (PEVE). Thus there have been more than superficial resemblances between LEATGS and PICKUP (Professional, Industrial and Commercial Up-dating Programme). The overall effect of each has been to force providers into a market system within which programmes are justified by whether the client wishes to buy them rather than by HE judgement about their intrinsic worth. As a result providers are more likely to negotiate with potential clients and offer them, if required, one-off, tailor-made courses.

LEATGS put money which was previously more directly available to HE into the hands of LEAs and their institutions. They have naturally sought what they perceive to be 'value-for-money' provision, often finding it cheaper to use their own advisory staff or free-lance trainers rather than buy in the services of HE.

In the CHES reports (1990 and 1991) it was suggested that there were at least three factors which constrained the development of true market relations in INSET. First, the client himself is subject to the detailed directives of an external agency, the DES; second, the client is not a business enterprise and has serious problems of his own in moving from a service to a commercial ethic; and third, the client and the provider have

a whole series of pre-existing and on-going relationships of mutual dependency in matters such as initial teacher training, research and other forms of development work which, as yet, do not operate on a market basis. Many providers expressed the fear that charging cost prices for INSET might turn all their dealings with their LEA into financial ones. (2)

The advent of LEATGS therefore disturbed the equilibrium between LEAs and HE, which was perhaps inevitable, given the clear intention of the DES to reduce the emphasis on higher education courses for serving teachers. Undoubtedly, HE has suffered, losing many students, especially from full-time courses. It has had to turn more to the provision of short, skills-focussed courses and to revise these frequently in the face of changing circumstances and changing demands. The result has been to force the pace on modularisation and credit transfer/accumulation as providers have encouraged teachers attending short courses (or undertaking development projects in their own schools), to seek credit towards an advanced diploma or degree, thereby triggering subsidy from the University Funding Council. This trend seems likely to persist unless the DES intervenes : all the HE institutions visited during this research project claimed that it was enormously difficult to recover the full cost of INSET provision from LEAs and thus it was supported only through hidden subsidy from other activities.

What conclusion might one draw from this account ? Despite the public statements in both HMI reports and DES Circulars that the loss of 'HE expertise' was regrettable, and despite the statement made at an Institute of Education conference in January 1987 by the Senior HMI responsible for teacher training that "we" would continue to rely on HE to produce the "intellectual cadre" among teachers, one direct consequence of the new pattern of INSET has been a cut back in the number of teachers following courses which might foster an independent and critical spirit.

The question of whether, for the DES, this was a planned result or an unintended consequence is obviously speculative. It seems likely that the DES had little time for the extended award-bearing courses which had grown so popular among teachers since the mid sixties and had encouraged many university departments and public sector training colleges into areas of scholarship beyond initial teacher training. Such courses were disliked partly on the grounds of efficiency and effectiveness, but also because teachers chose them on the basis of individual interest rather than system needs. Many such courses had only an indirect relationship to the practicalities of teaching.

Moreover, under the influence of theorists such as Lawrence Stenhouse, the ideological message implicit in many advanced courses supported the notion of professional responsibility for curriculum development, classroom research and evaluation, a stance which was not attractive to a government intent on re-asserting central control of the curriculum. Many HE staff were seen as arch-critics of educational policy during the eighties, concerned to purvey an out-dated egalitarianism. Thus, one must assume that the impact of LEATGS on HE was seen as a welcome push towards a more practice-focussed, policy-sensitive and market-orientated attitude to INSET.

The link between the impact on HE and the government's apparent intention to re-define the role of teachers is obvious. The problem is essentially concerned with the degree of autonomy teachers and schools should exercise in relation to the curriculum. Should teachers see the curriculum as a given, determined by others - politicians, bureaucrats, employers and some token educators - before issues of implementation arise ? If teachers are to be restricted to the execution of the curriculum, and debarred from involvement in its conception (Apple and Teitelbaum, 1986), then training will naturally focus on the implementation of prior decisions, and the currently popular term "delivery" becomes peculiarly appropriate. Needs identification becomes a relatively straightforward matter of measuring the present capacity of teachers against the knowledge and skills required to "deliver" the curriculum. Thus, the funding of in-service education and training through specific grant involves mechanisms of bid and contract which re-inforce a conception of curriculum development as something logically prior to teacher development ; and therefore, intentionally or not, it undermines the professionalism of teachers in a form which has been the object and rationale of much of the best of both initial and in-service education (see Harland 1987b for a further discussion of this point).

Such developments are not, however, confined to this country. The conclusion of a recent paper on INSET in Queensland, Australia, might well have been written as a description of LEATGS :

*Practicality, relevance and immediacy as dominant design features in inservice education policy and programmes restrict the focus of attention and inexorably limit teachers' roles to that of technologists whose worth is judged in terms of how well they can efficiently and effectively meet the requirements set by central management.*

*(Sachs and Logan, 1990, p480)*

My argument, therefore, is that LEATGS has made a significant contribution to the re-definition of teacher professionalism in the post-ERA world, and that this is no small part of its overall impact.

From the above, it would seem that the key characteristics of the replication/impact phase as described for TVEI are only partially applicable here. LEATGS virtually eradicated the existing patterns of INSET ; its impact was thus huge and needed little, if any, promotion. In this it differed from TVEI. But as in TVEI, it nevertheless remained important to secure not only compliance but also support for the new policy. From discussions with LEA co-ordinators during the LEATGS years, it seems that the twists and turns of the department's administration of the scheme (with its heavy demands for information, sudden changes of direction, and short time-scales) inhibited whole-hearted support, despite the fact that most approved of the general direction of policy.

Finally, as with TVEI, we can only guess at the full impact of LEATGS. Beyond the identifiable results, there are immeasurable consequences ; this section has identified two areas upon which the policy impinged - but there are undoubtedly many more.

## **6.8 Discussion**

In Chapter 5 I came to three broad conclusions about the significance of TVEI which appeared to relate to the use of categorical funding. I propose to discuss LEATGS under the same headings.

### ***Relationships within the system***

It was suggested that with TVEI, an agency outside the educational mainstream confronted and changed the existing methods of effecting change within the education system. In LEATGS we see the incorporation of a very similar strategy into the central government department responsible for education. TVEI may have broken the DES monopoly in educational matters, but it appears to have stimulated a more pro-active style in that department by modelling an effective mechanism for policy implementation.

In the hands of the DES, LEATGS did not so much create new relationships as transform existing ones. In removing a considerable degree of LEA autonomy in relation to INSET, in standardising expenditure on INSET as between LEAs, in requiring specified approaches to management, it forced LEAs to conform to its own conception of what should be done.

TVEI, it was claimed, had broken into the traditional relationships within the education system by partial contracting - some LEAs, some schools, some students, some LEA personnel - and thereby it had diversified allegiances and promoted competition. LEATGS differed in that it was intended to transform the whole. Indicative allowances meant that no authority was to be excluded but rather that all should benefit (and have their INSET strategy re-shaped), subject only to playing the game by DES rules. Thus LEATGS brought the DES a greater degree of detailed influence and control over LEA activity than had previously been the case, by-passing both political and professional preferences at the local level and thereby carrying forward the government's more general policy of curtailing local authority autonomy.

### *Altering the mandate*

In Chapter 5, Figure 5 offered a comparison between the operational style of the MSC and that of the DES. Dale's argument that, in accommodating to TVEI, the DES took on some kind of hybridised version of the two was seen as relevant to the years 1982 to 1987 (Dale, 1989b). LEATGS post-dates the pilot years of TVEI and covers the years since the 1987 election, years which have seen a shift from the rhetoric of Conservative education reform to its statutory enactment. I have argued above that this involved the curtailment of LEA autonomy to the point where their very existence came to be questioned. The corollary of this is that central authority must adopt a more proactive and interventionist stance. Many of the features of operational style which were attributed to the MSC in Dale's analysis are now demonstrably part of the mainstream functioning of the DES.

It may be useful to pause for a moment to look at the terms 'allocative' and 'productive' which appear in the final pairing in Figure 5. These are terms derived from the work of Claus Offe who was interested in the response of the state to what he saw as a crisis in crisis management. This crisis derives from the problems which occur under advanced capitalism when the state finds increasing difficulty in reconciling the need to support capital accumulation while simultaneously meeting demands for

state management of a re-distributive social system. In these circumstances, Offe argues that the state has to find new ways of attempting to meet its obligations. His ideas on this (published in German) are well described by Jessop in the following passage :

*(Offe) distinguishes between two types of state activity : allocative and productive. Allocation involves the general use of state resources to secure the general framework of economic activity and/or to provide general public services in accordance with general constitutional or legislative codes which reflect the prevailing balance of political forces. Production involves direct state provision or state-sponsored provision of material resources as a pre-condition of crisis-avoidance or crisis-management where there is no general code which can be applied and decision rules must therefore be developed in order to determine the most effective action case by case. Offe then argues that although rational-legal bureaucratic administration may be appropriate to the allocative activities of the state, it is inadequate to the demands of state productive activities in so far as these are oriented to the attainment of particular objectives rather than the general application of pre-given rules. Thus bureaucracy must be replaced with new modes of policy formation and implementation.*

*(Jessop, 1982, pp110-11)*

This is not the place to argue whether it is reasonable to interpret Conservative education policy during the eighties as a response to a perceived threat to the processes of capital accumulation, though the economic rationale which has so often accompanied policy pronouncements might encourage one to do so. However, what is clear is that in schemes such as LEATGS the government has sought to become pro-active, to seize the initiative rather than to follow existing conventions as to how things are done in the education system. In Offe's terms this is surely a shift from the role of presiding over allocation to that of producing policy geared to the wider tasks of a crisis-managing state.

### ***New patterns of policy formulation***

Reference has already been made to Glickman's view that the decision of the Secretary of State to take on responsibility for INSET was in itself a policy decision (Glickman et al, 1990, para 32). This decision was, in part, legitimised by the ACSET report (DES, 1984a) but the funding arrangements proposed by Keith Joseph were at odds with the committee's recommendations and were not, in any way, the object of consultation. It was as much a political decision as an educational one.

Turning to the content of the programme, we have evidence from the same report (para 108) that the NPAs were selected by policy divisions in response to their own perception of the training implications of the Education Reform Act, rather than by any more traditional exercise in consultation. In moving to the new GEST scheme, the DES finally declared that, as there is an identity of interest between central and local government in the cause of educational reform, there can no longer be any need for expenditure on INSET not specified as an NPA, thus effectively rejecting the concept of consultation altogether. There is an equally autocratic stance in relation to INSET management practices which, it is implied, must conform to DES views of good practice.

A further change in the practice of policy formulation relates to the annual cycle. The DES has accepted that LEAs do need some indication that specific programmes will receive funds over two or more years, but overall the subjection of policy to the constraints of planning within the financial year represents another shift to a more bureaucratic and centralised form of control.

In Chapter 5, I concluded that the advent of categorical funding enabled and facilitated these changes. Now that the strategy has been adopted in the DES itself, there is something else to add. Any government which aspires to curtail the administration of a public service at the local level must expect an enormous increase in its own operations, with a corresponding escalation of its supervisory role. The virtue of categorical funding in establishing contract as the basis of policy implementation is that the need for close supervision tends to diminish once the system is established. Such is the nature of contract, that the fact and the manner of resource allocation in this mode is in itself a powerful and economical means of control.

#### Foot-notes

1. The comment on sustained critique is not one to pass lightly. It may be thought that in a world in which public monies are increasingly distributed through contract, it is often far from diplomatic to be seen as a public critic of public policy. In the particular case of LEATGS, higher education providers are seen as net losers in the re-distribution of INSET monies while at the same time they are increasingly dependent on LEA and school patronage for their slice of the cake. Coupled with that, they are also increasingly dependent upon government funding for various forms of contract research. It is therefore perhaps rather naive to expect them to offer much in the way of critical commentary on current developments.

2. As things have turned out, the provisions for the local management of schools contained in the Education Reform Act of 1988 have been even more decisive in introducing a market relationship between schools and HE.

## THE CASE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to show how the advent of categorical funding in the school sector has been paralleled by similar developments in higher education. The account which follows draws upon the various reports prepared for the CHES project on Monitoring and Evaluation of New Funding Mechanisms in Higher Education, undertaken between 1988 and 1991 (see Chapter 1, foot-note 1). The writer of this thesis was a member of the research team, conducted three of the case studies, contributed to all the various themes encompassed by the study and was responsible for writing up the findings on Continuing Education including the PICKUP programme and the HE experience of INSET. Full references to the relevant reports, published and unpublished, can be found in the bibliography under CHES (1990 and 1991) and Williams (1992). The following overview and analysis is, however, that of the author alone.

This chapter can deal only briefly with the substantial findings of the research project. It will focus on five specific government initiatives introduced at various points during the 1980s. Although widely different in focus these initiatives shared twin objectives : in the first place, each aimed to stimulate activity in an area of policy priority ; and in the second, each sought to encourage higher education institutions to secure additional private sector funding by inviting the collaboration of industry and commerce in what were seen as mutually beneficial activities. Of the five projects, three were primarily concerned with teaching (the Engineering and Technology Programme, the Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative, and the Professional, Industrial and Commercial Updating Programme), and two (the Alvey programme and the Interdisciplinary Research Centres programme) were focused on research. All however were funded by a procedure which involved an initial specification of the programme's objectives (criteria) followed by a process of competitive bidding and the award of contracts to the successful applicants. All had monitoring and evaluation procedures of some kind and all were intended to influence the system beyond the scope of the funded activities themselves. Before looking at them in further detail, however, it will be useful to make some general comments about the financing of higher education in the years preceding these various initiatives.



To quote from the Final Report of the CHES study -

*The 1980s was not a decade simply of cuts in higher education resources. Overall it was a period of modest growth, although expenditure per student certainly fell. The sources of funds, the channels through which they became available to universities, polytechnics and colleges, the relative shares of the two sectors, and the activities for which they were used, changed considerably. There was a shift away from incremental and loosely monitored formula funding by a single government agency towards more closely specified formulae and contractual funding by a wider variety of public and private funding bodies.*

*(CHES, August 1991)*

To illustrate this statement we can compare the percentage sources of university funds for 1981-82 with the projected figures for 1991-92 (CHES, May 1990). The most notable change is in the figure for unallocated block grant which fell from 64% to 40%. If we add to that the total for UK student fees (mostly paid by government), these figures become 72% and 60% respectively. Remaining income is derived from less predictable sources. The figure for Research Council income (for which universities have to compete) rises from 6% to 10% of the overall total. Overseas student fees now represent 10% of the total rather than 6%, and income from UK business is now 8% rather than a mere 1%. All these are areas in which universities must effectively compete with each other.

These shifts represent a steady opening up of higher education to market forces. The CHES Final Report suggested that the case for the market rests on three main suppositions :

- 1. the private sector can relieve governments of some of the cost burden;*
- 2. many of the benefits of higher education accrue to private individuals and they should be prepared to pay for them;*
- 3. efficiency improves if government agencies buy services from universities rather than make grants to them; so the system has to be responsive to consumer demands.*

*(CHES, August 1991, p9)*

The case studies revealed a related shift in the organisational arrangements within institutions. Overall the traditional pattern of administrative allocation and regulation based on consensus has given way to systems of financial management based upon devolved responsibilities (cost centres), target setting and various forms of incentives. There is, however, considerable diversity as to how this is occurring, not least because

of competing perceptions about how to facilitate initiative in the matter of income generation while retaining appropriate levels of financial and other forms of control.

The clearest statement of the government's predilection for the market is contained in the White Paper Higher Education : Meeting the Challenge (DES, 1987a) and subsequently incorporated in the Education Reform Act of 1988. Under the system thereby instituted the University Grants Committee was replaced by the University Funding Council with a parallel shift for public sector higher education. In paragraph 4.17 of the White Paper the government made clear its intentions :

*The government therefore proposes, in place of grants, a system of contracting between institutions and the new planning and funding body. Its intention is to*

- encourage institutions to be enterprising in attracting contracts from other sources, particularly the private sector, and thereby to lessen their present degree of dependence on public funding;*
- sharpen accountability for the use of public funds;*
- strengthen the commitment of institutions to the delivery of the educational services which it is agreed with the new planning and funding body they should provide.*

*(DES, 1987, para 4.17)*

Paragraph 4.21 states that new contracts will depend upon an assessment of past performance and that "Any serious failure to meet the terms of a previous contract may result in revised terms or a failure to renew". Parallel arrangements were proposed for the polytechnics but under the Further and Higher Education Act (March 1992), both sectors were brought together under a single national funding council. (Coincidentally, polytechnics were re-classified as universities and the Crosland concept of a binary system containing both public and private sectors within higher education came to an end.)

The overall direction of higher education policy, and the role of resource allocation in achieving this, should now be clear and it is time to look at the specific initiatives examined by the CHES project. These show early moves to implement policy through discrete excursions into categorical funding, the mechanism which is now to dominate all financial relationships between central government and higher education.

For this account of HE initiatives, I propose to abandon the structure of the previous two chapters which explored the various elements of categorical funding in turn. Apart from adding a little variety, it is clearly better to deal with each programme separately, drawing out for each the way in which they were shaped by the manner of their funding.

## **7.1 The Alvey Programme**

This programme was launched in 1983 as a direct result of the report of the Alvey Committee which had been set up to advise on the scope for collaborative research in Information Technology. The programme was managed from the Department of Trade and Industry. Its object was to increase the competitiveness of the UK's IT suppliers by funding pre-competitive, RD and D, and collaborative activities which it was hoped would ensure "a measure of self-reliance in key technological areas for commercial and defence purposes" (SSPRU, 1987). The total funds allocated by government amounted to £200 million but it was hoped that a further £150 million would be contributed by the private sector.

The model of categorical funding used in the Alvey programme was relatively unsophisticated, demonstrating how far such mechanisms have developed since the early eighties. In the first place, the programme was essentially developmental and the criteria for success were not readily definable. In the second place, it was specifically intended to promote collaboration between universities, polytechnics, research councils, government departments and industry. The target group was therefore diffuse. The range of activities was spread across four distinct key technologies within the computing industry, and projects also varied along a continuum from pure research to those with a potential for immediate exploitation in the market place. At the height of the programme in June 1987, the Alvey directorate had approved 198 industrial projects, and 115 academic-only projects. Across the programme, 115 commercial firms, 68 universities and polytechnics, and 24 other research institutions were involved. A typical project had 3.9 partners, two from industry and the remainder from academic institutions. These particulars do not suggest a scheme uniform enough to be susceptible to tight control through the normal mechanisms of categorical funding.

The case studies disclosed no serious complaints about the costs of the bidding process, partly because the success rate was judged sufficiently high to warrant the time and effort involved. However there did not seem to be any precise way of estimating such costs : only two out of the fifteen were able to express these in monetary terms, and others suggested time costs which varied between one and nine man-months. The need for many meetings between potential and actual collaborators made heavy demands on staff time but these are notoriously hard to cost. Judgements as to whether the process was "worth-while" often seemed to be intuitive and related to the size of the grant received.

There were other problems surrounding the bidding process. One university reported that, not knowing which of its bids might succeed, it had been difficult to plan ahead for the provision of facilities and staff and that this had distorted their resource allocations. Another complaint referred to the time-lag between the notification of a successful bid and the actual award of grant. Such criticisms reflect the views of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (December 1988) which reported that the effectiveness of the programme had been hampered by lack of administrative staff, poor financial and management systems, and delays in formalising collaborations.

It would seem that monitoring processes were restricted to financial auditing while evaluation was carried out by the Social Policy Research Unit. The Unit produced several interim reports which endorsed the beneficial effects of collaborative enterprises, but noted the problem of skill shortages in developing the research and also complained of the poor administration of the programme. However it is interesting to note that before its final evaluation report fell due in September 1990, the government had already decided to terminate the Alvey programme ; industrially-oriented IT research will, in future, be supported by the EEC's ESPRIT programme, while a much smaller sum will be available through the new Information Engineering Advanced Technology programme for more fundamental research. This again neatly points up the restricted role of evaluation within categorical funding : programme realities are determined by broader political and economic determinants and evaluation relates strictly to accountability, implementation and apple-polishing.

What of the programme's impact ? Our case study institutions agreed with the general view that Alvey fostered co-operation between different interest groups though there is some criticism of the super-imposed "club" structures which were intended to act as information exchanges. More seriously, others complained that the funding was neither adequate nor long-lived enough to make real inroads into the country's technological deficit in the area. Moreover they feared that the new European arrangements would complicate the task of negotiating partnership arrangements. But for the purposes of this thesis perhaps the most significant comment comes from the Advisory Board for the Research Councils (ABRC) which said that the Alvey scheme had pioneered an important means of bringing together Research Councils, universities, polytechnics, government departments and industry which "serves as a model which may usefully be extended and applied in other areas of research" (ABRC, 1986).

### **7.3 The Engineering and Technology Programme (ETP)**

The ETP programme was announced in 1984 and launched in 1985. It was administered by the UGC and by NAB, though its bias remained heavily in favour of the universities. It was designed to increase the number of student places in science, engineering and technology and from the start, it was intended to favour those institutions which could demonstrate that they enjoyed the support of industry in terms of employment for graduates, donations of equipment and other resources, and support within the teaching programmes. Over a three year period, the programme distributed a total of £45 million with funds going variously towards recurrent expenditure, equipment and, in the second and third years, building programmes.

The initial approach from the UGC to selected universities specified the principles (criteria) upon which it was considering allocating an unspecified sum of earmarked money. At that stage it asked for nothing more than "academic profiles and general statements of intent, with a very rough indication of the resource implications". The letter was however accompanied by a very elaborate questionnaire ! Over 30 universities responded, covering more than 250 departments. Twenty were finally included in the scheme, to provide 3,900 places by 1990. They were subsequently joined by 8 polytechnics offering a further 353 places.

The time-consuming nature of the bidding process attracted some criticism from those institutions within our sample that had been involved with ETP. Those looking to mount new courses took more time than those providing additional spaces on existing ones. In general, those whose plans involved building schemes had to invest the greatest amounts of time in the process, but it is perhaps not fair to blame upon the task of bidding the problems associated with designing, constructing and equipping new premises. As with the Alvey programme, institutions were uncertain as to how to cost the time spent preparing bids, partly because it is difficult to determine just which activities, meetings and planning activities are to be counted in. However, most judged the time invested worthwhile, considering the benefits of the programme and the success rate of bids.

Monitoring activities by both UGC and NAB appear to have been restricted to the collection of information about recruitment, paying little or no attention to the original "principle" of industrial involvement. Evaluation as such played no part, presumably because the original objective was simply a numbers game. The programme was initially referred as the "Shift" and later the "Switch" to science and technology : this

made the criterion of success unequivocal. Two universities fell short of their funded and contracted targets, and resources were accordingly clawed back.

The response of the case study institutions to the impact of ETP was almost universally warm. While for all it was a welcome source of extra funds in a period of economic stringency, for some it had effects out of all proportion to the funds involved. One university reported that the initiative had allowed them to change the character of the institution by shifting the emphasis away from the Humanities, while another claimed that it had helped them to realise priorities previously constrained by funding cuts and the freezing of posts. Not only had they recruited younger members of staff but these people had brought with them new kinds of expertise which in some cases had revolutionised the teaching of obsolescent courses. Together with new equipment and improved accommodation, new staff had also allowed for expansion into new areas of research and into more productive relationships with local companies. While all this did not necessarily make for happier relationships with the rest of the university, it does demonstrate the efficacy of targetted resources. On the face of it, £45 million is no great sum, but its impact was clearly substantial and shows once more the efficiency of categorical funding as a device for policy implementation.

What the UGC and NAB made abundantly clear to their 'clients' is that in the matter of the ETP they were acting under instructions from the DES. The department was taking the decisions about the overall number of places, the funds which would be allocated, the kind of courses which would be funded and the criteria on which they were to be judged. In this it was using a particular funding mechanism to anticipate the changes in the role of the UGC, later confirmed in the Education Reform Act which replaced the Committee with the more closely controlled University Funding Council.

#### **7.4 The Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative (EHE)**

This scheme was launched in 1987 by the Secretary of State for Employment with the support of his colleagues in Education and Science, Trade and Industry, Scotland and Wales. It is administered through the Training, Education and Enterprise Department of the Department of Employment, the successor to what has been in turn the Manpower Services Commission, the Training Commission and the Training Agency. Given the Department's ground-breaking work with TVEI, we can reasonably expect to find in EHE a well-developed model of contractual funding. I intend, therefore, to deal somewhat more fully with this programme than with the Alvey programme, the ETP or - still to come - the IRC programme.

In its first four years the department committed itself to spend about £60 million over an eight year period to encourage "the development of qualities of enterprise amongst those seeking higher education qualifications" (Training Agency, 1989b). In the initial "Guidance for Applicants", the main objectives were expressed in very general terms : namely, that first degree students should be able to develop "competence and aptitudes relevant to enterprise", acquired at least in part through project work undertaken in a "real economic setting" and jointly assessed by HE and employers. To achieve such a programme, providers would have to offer more than "simple bolt-on modules in Business Studies" ; sound proposals would have to show evidence of both course and staff development and would have to indicate the involvement of industry in practical and resource terms. All HE institutions were invited to bid though it was suggested that those not ready to mount a full scheme in the first year might bid for a smaller amount of development funds during the first round in order to help them prepare a full-scale bid for the second round.

In the first round a total of 128 outline bids were received of which 82 were for full funding. Twenty institutions were invited to prepare full bids, and from these eleven - 4 universities and 7 polytechnics - were selected for full funding. By 1991 EHE was being implemented in 41 institutions and 15 more proposals had been accepted to begin in 1991-92. The Department claims that 90% of those institutions eligible to bid have now done so but "because the bidding is competitive, some have not secured funding" (Department of Employment, April 1991).

In a refinement of earlier, say TVEI, practice, the Training Agency published the criteria on which the first round submissions had been judged (TA, January 1989a). These criteria effectively became the operational criteria to which future bids have had to attend, thus re-inforcing the argument that precision is often an emergent process that critically depends upon the practical possibilities which become clear as practitioners put forward concrete proposals.

Our case study institutions had submitted twenty first round bids between them and of these, four proved successful. Of those who had made unsuccessful bids, five (three universities, one polytechnic and one other) thought it unlikely that they would bid again. One reason for reluctance was the perception that the chance of success was limited ; this led them to doubt whether bidding was worth the effort. Other problems with constructing a bid concerned the need to involve the whole institution, and a suspicion that the complexities of the scheme out-weighed the benefits. Others felt inhibited by strong competition from neighbouring institutions, while some felt that

their predominantly rural location made it difficult for them to put together the required back-up system from local industry. None explicitly criticised the objectives of the scheme and it was interesting that several said their initial bid had been prompted by a desire not to be seen as "anti-enterprise". Another interesting response came from a polytechnic which was unsuccessful in the first round but planned to bid again in the second ; their perception had been that they needed only to capitalise on their existing substantial links with industry and that their bid would be "mainly a matter of co-ordinating what was already going on ...." : this, presumably, was not what the sponsor had in mind.

Twelve of the twenty case study institutions were able to give reasonably clear estimates of the costs involved in bidding for EHE funds, which suggests that institutions were becoming more aware of the need to make such calculations. It is apparent from our data that the successful bidders had invested more in their bids than the unsuccessful. As a result of careful analysis, the research team concluded that the total opportunity costs to institutions of the bids submitted amounted to some 4.4% of the funds disbursed in the first round (though it is important to remember that some of these costs presumably contributed to success in later rounds). Estimates of cost do not, however, include the time invested in meetings and other contacts by collaborators in industry.

Our enquiries were concerned to explore the experience of bidding and the nature of response to failure. There were predictable complaints about the tight timetable, and also about the lack of specific advance information about the criteria on which the first round bids were to be judged. There was further familiar comment about shifting goal-posts when the Training Agency asked for a much more detailed financial statement with second round bids. More seriously, one institution with a strong track record of employer involvement was rejected on the grounds that the Training Agency preferred to support institutions with a low level of such activity, and was left with a feeling of resentment about the precise objectives of the programme. Another felt aggrieved that its carefully devised plan, which had absorbed three months of staff time, had been rejected "on a cursory examination of its front page". A third felt that it should have received more feed-back on its unsuccessful bid ; a fourth, despite initial enthusiasm, described the whole process as an "unseemly rush ... it was unreasonable to expect that higher education should suddenly drop everything to prepare bids for the Training Agency" ; and others that the management structures required by the Training Agency were inappropriate and that university autonomy was under threat. Some complained that there was no provision for the cost of bidding and one university had concluded



that this and other Training Agency initiatives invariably resulted in a net loss to the institution.

Bidding is, of course, an integral part of categorical funding because it under-pins the existence of contract and contractual-type relationships. The issue raised by the bidding component in this EHE exercise concerns the question of whether stiff competition is productive, in so far as it tends to deter some and to alienate the unsuccessful. However, despite the apparently widespread disillusion which followed the first round exercise, as the EHE moved into its later rounds, institutions became more confident that bidding would pay dividends. By the time the fourth round winners were announced, 7 of our 14 universities, and 8 of our 10 polytechnics and colleges, had gained a place in the scheme. This, however, does not in itself prove the virtue of competition. It will be remembered that in the LEATGS scheme discussed in the last chapter, we saw the operation of an alternative model, namely the use of indicative allowances to be triggered on submission of an acceptable proposal.

The research programme was able to pay some attention to questions concerning the management of EHE within institutions, and to its impact on teaching. Of major importance is the evidence that, as required by the Training Agency, EHE projects had developed identifiable management structures of their own. The majority had a newly appointed EHE director, answerable to a committee or committees, and through them subject to TA scrutiny. Beyond that, institutions varied in the extent to which they devolved activities to individual departments. The Department's own 1991 report makes further observations on these points (Department of Employment, 1991, pp6-7). Drawing on evaluation work carried out by the Tavistock Institute (see below), it distinguishes between enthusiastic, emergent and reluctant "modernisers" and claims that each type has tended to produce a particular style of response : in general, the enthusiasts have developed a clear central function but within that, substantial devolution ; the emergent have gone in for "taller" institutional hierarchies and relative centralisation ; while down among the reluctant, the style has been predominantly "de-centralised or dispersed ..... (where) real power is vested in pioneering first year departments or courses". These distinctions are further related to differing models of curriculum and staff development.

The document from which these comments are drawn appears to demonstrate that the Employment Department still has an edge over the DES in the matter of promoting curriculum development through categorical funding, as much as anything because it has evolved methods of tolerating diversity within limits, even in such fundamental

matters as the interpretation of 'enterprise'. It also, quite explicitly, builds on the experience of TVEI in areas such as student assessment, and monitoring and evaluation. For example, they state

*In entering into contracts to accept ED funding, HEIs commit themselves to a process of monitoring of enterprise outcomes. Each HEI has a number of annual contract targets to meet ... Information about these 'performance indicators' is collated by ED to provide statistics about EHE.*

*There is a tension in the field of evaluation : on one hand evaluation is concerned to collect information in order to monitor progress towards objectives and exercise financial accountability ; on the other hand it is a formative exercise, aiding growth and development.*

*(Department of Employment, 1991, p27)*

For the EHE programme, the department chose to replicate the evaluation strategy which it had adopted for TVEI, with a mix of national and local evaluation. National evaluations were commissioned from the Tavistock Institute and the NFER. The Tavistock addressed the "soft" issues through a series of case studies while the NFER collected "harder" evidence about "interim outcomes" through questionnaires. Each EHE programme was charged with responsibility for "devising and approving Local Evaluation Strategies". These were to operate within "guide-lines" but they were allowed considerable discretion as to focus, methodology, and the choice of internal or external evaluators. Local strategies had to meet ED requirements for performance indicators but, at the same time, they were expected to "play an essentially developmental role". The Report also refers to "the variety of information about the design, management, and introduction of EHE (which) is being amassed and analysed" and acknowledges that

*Unfortunately some of the staff and the employer partners involved in EHE have been inundated with paperwork. This has led to a prevalence of 'evaluation fatigue' which may militate against the collection of data.*

*(op cit, p27)*

There are distinct echoes here of the comments by the DES's own officials on the superfluity of data collected in the course of monitoring and evaluating LEATGS (Glickman and Dale, 1990).

In the light of earlier discussions, there are three comments to make. First, and perhaps not surprisingly, the Department does not here explicitly acknowledge its own dependence on the provision of adequate data for the purposes of upward accountability and programme maintenance. Second, we must assume that, as with TVEI and other similar programmes in the school sector, programme managers at both local and

national level will have the same low toleration of negative findings. And third, once again we see that where monitoring and evaluation play a significant role in the process of control through scrutiny, the burden on the scrutinised is often very heavy and the pressure to report and be reported upon can well exceed the inherent advantages of the exercise.

It is still rather early to gauge the impact of EHE. It is clearly targetted on the teaching of first degree students. The Department claims that the programme relates to developments in other areas of education and training :

*Two significant themes which have emerged have been the move towards active, experiential learning styles and the goal of making the curriculum more relevant to the world of work." (op cit, 1991, p1)*

It has allowed broad interpretations of 'enterprise', accepting programmes which concentrate upon the development of transferable skills and personal effectiveness as alternatives to a narrow focus on enterprise as entrepreneurship. It has argued strongly for more "process-led styles of learning", and in many institutions the programme seems to be as much about developments in pedagogy, and therefore staff development, as it is about course content. The involvement of industry is designed to promote opportunities for "practical experience and real-life problem-solving", thus linking the first and second aims in the quotation above. In some schemes, there are more explicit attempts to introduce students to the world of work, while others have sought to integrate "enterprise" courses into regular degree programmes through additional modules. But overall the significance of all these approaches is that they represent a breach in the barricades which HE has traditionally erected between the learning experiences of their students and the outside world.

Another measure of impact has been the manner in which, as in other instances, this funding strategy has apparently succeeded in buying more than is actually paid for. Initial funding had to be matched by a commitment in cash or kind from the institution itself and its employer partners. Moreover, it was intended as pump-priming finance such that, at the end of five years, the programme should become "self-financing".

But perhaps the most significant impact of EHE is its contribution to a changing relationship between HE and the government. This is well illustrated by one university in our sample which did not bid in the first round but felt it would be wise to do so in the second because

*.... it is impossible to ignore the political implications. If an institution does not participate it runs the risk of being seen as anti-enterprise and could suffer in many ways as a consequence .... the college has no option but to show willing.*

*(quoted in CHES report, 1990)*

In conclusion, the EHE programme demonstrates all that has been learned from the experience of TVEI in terms of programme administration. The language of bid and contract, and all that follows from their adoption, is much more up-front ; whereas in the early days it fell to researchers to seek for labels such as these to name the elements which they observed in the implementation of new policy, government is now speaking directly to its clients in these terms - and those clients are responding in the same language.

## **7.5 Interdisciplinary Research Centres (IRCs)**

The policy intention behind the IRC programme was to encourage a greater concentration and more strategic planning of university research.

In March 1988 the first IRC was established at Cambridge and by the middle of 1989 (the point at which the CHES data was collected), a further sixteen had been established or were in the process of formation. By 1990 a sum of approximately £120 million had been committed over a 5 - 10 year period, a growing proportion of total research funding.

Funds were distributed via the Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The aim was to concentrate research efforts based on existing strengths, to encourage more interdisciplinary work, and to increase efforts in important areas of strategic science, especially with a view to "exploitability and applicability" (ABRC, 1988). Furthermore, it was hoped that the IRCs would improve the inter-face between strategic research in higher education and in industry; and would also lead to the more purposeful management of HE research and to more effective collaboration between HE and the Research Councils.

The money for the IRCs came from within the existing block grant and was allocated in accordance with the kind of bidding procedures explored in this thesis. The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) responded to the original proposals by expressing their concern that the programme might well lead to new rigidities, restricting the capacity of HE to respond quickly to new ideas. They were

also concerned that the programme might lead to a further concentration of research, an outcome which appeared to be in line with a growing government determination to differentiate between those HE institutions which concentrated on research and those which were primarily concerned with teaching. The allocation of IRC funding up to 1990 has indeed favoured what have been termed the "existing research heavy-weights", namely Imperial College London, Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh.

The IRC programme is therefore a further clear example of a move to implement policy through the process of ear-marking funds (in this case from within existing allocations) and then to shift both policy and practice within the system by distributing funds through the mechanisms of bid and contract. It is interesting that although there continued to be complaints about the mechanics of this style of resource allocation, by the end of the eighties it no longer seemed novel. The IRC programme, however, has not had a smooth ride. A group set up to review the IRC programme published an interim report in 1989 which, while recognising that the initiative "catalysed, and gave urgency to, discussions about new interdisciplinary structures" concluded that

*in future IRCs should be developed in a rather different way. This view is based on our belief that the IRC mode of funding should be considered as one of a number of possible ways of funding ; and that a decision to follow the IRC mode in a particular case should emerge from the normal process of reviewing areas, and deciding priorities, rather than through a special exercise.*

*(Flemming Report, 1989, p28)*

The IRC programme raises a whole series of interesting issues - among them, the relationship between research and teaching, the knock-on effect on non-IRC research of concentrating staff and resources in IRCs, and the optimum conditions for the generation of new, as yet unanticipated, ideas and lines of research. But in this context there is space only to refer to some of the evidence from the CHES project about the operation of the funding procedures.

The Flemming report was critical of the bidding process : submissions were prepared hurriedly and without the detailed preparation that they warranted; institutions made commitments that were not properly thought through; applications were submitted without a clear understanding of what was expected, and expectations themselves changed during the process; and a great deal of nugatory work was done.

All these reports were corroborated by comments made to the CHES team. We were also told about the problems caused when the rules of the game are changed

between the publication of criteria and the concluding of contracts, and beyond. This vacillation seems to be so much a part of categorical funding that it is widely referred by its own cliché : "moving the goal posts" is now a term used across all sectors of education wherever educational administrators are to be found grappling with categorically funded projects. There are several possible explanations as to why such programmes evoke this standard response. It might, for example, indicate that those responsible for the scheme are exploring new ways of doing things in a genuinely open manner so that both the programme's objectives and its administrative procedures are continuing to evolve during the implementation phase. On the other hand, it might equally demonstrate the vulnerability of such politically significant programmes to micro-shifts in policy : thus criteria come to reflect even small shifts in political priorities. (These explanations leave aside the more cynical explanation that "moving the goal-posts" keeps everyone on their toes and simultaneously reinforces central control.)

In the case of the IRCs, there is evidence to support two, if not three, of these explanations. One major shift occurred when the SERC altered its original requirement that collaboration with other institutions and with industry should be stressed to a ruling that such collaboration "should be minor, not part of the basic structure" (letter from Chairman of SERC to HE institutions, 1989). In another instance, the SERC promised two awards but made only one ; and in another, bids were specifically requested but no award was made at all. A further complaint from our case study institutions was that no explanations for policy shifts were given, nor feed-back on unsuccessful applications.

Of the 24 institutions in our sample, 14 had bid for IRCs and 6, all universities, had been successful. All 14 stated that the bidding process was complex, lengthy and costly. The Research Councils made available to institutions their plans for future IRCs based on ABRC projections as to where established disciplines were converging. They also indicated their financial projections and invited bids, although there was no guarantee that their indicated programme would be implemented. Institutions varied in the way in which they chose an individual or a team to respond but all agreed that drawing up the bid was an onerous task, involving the establishment of contacts and of possible arrangements for collaborative working. Costing the projected work was another complex task and several institutions claimed that they had under-estimated their eventual needs. The final bid might be a document of 200 pages or more. The cost of the bidding itself was very difficult to estimate : CHES calculations range as widely as from £10k to £250k.

Once the contract was agreed in outline, the associated problems did not go away. It is worth quoting at some length the comments of one university officer because they encapsulate much that was said about bidding within a number of programmes:

*I think I would like to get a message across to the Research Council and to the ones that sit on top there, that ..... these post contract negotiations have been infinitely complicated by continual changes of demands from the bureaucracy, in particular their habit of issuing one-week deadlines for extremely important decisions which involve tremendous amounts of time, and demanding that we work to these, but being themselves unable to answer even the simplest questions. We have said to them "in two months time you will be asking us for this. Could you clarify the guidelines so that we can start preparing?" They say "no, I'm sorry we can't, but we'll give you good notice when the time comes up". Two months later they ring up and say they want such and such in a week. I think this is a message that must get through. Quite a lot of our costs are due to the fact that we are just not able to work in a reasonable fashion. We have to drop everything and it is not as if it is just one initiative in a very small department, there are three or four that have been active during this period.*

*(quoted in CHES, 1990)*

## **7.6 The Professional, Industrial and Commercial Updating Programme (PICKUP)**

The PICKUP programme, which was announced in 1982, was primarily intended to address the training needs of employees in a rapidly changing work environment. In order to achieve this end, its objectives were two-fold. On the one hand it sought to help HE institutions in their efforts to increase their provision of short courses, the development of infra-structures and new marketing strategies in support of such work, and the encouragement of new teaching methods and approaches. On the other, it was intended to increase awareness among employers of the need for up-dating and of the way in which higher education could help in that task. These objectives did address many of the concerns of HE in the provision of Continuing Education ; but not all, for the focus was upon collective and commercial needs rather than upon those of the individual citizen.

PICKUP funds were distributed through the HE funding bodies and were subject to the usual bidding procedures. Institutions were required to set their bids within a broad strategic plan for the development of their Continuing Education activities. This had to include an estimate of how they intended to increase the number of courses offered, the number of students enrolled, and the fee income to be achieved in the planning period. Thus, coupled with the focus on infrastructure and marketing mentioned above, one

implicit policy intention was clearly to stimulate more development than was directly supported through the allocated funds.

It is not therefore surprising that the CHES data showed up some general uncertainty about the real purpose of PICKUP. The declared aim may well have been the training needs of the work-force and the wish to see the resources of HE fully used and appropriately paid for by the employers who stood to benefit. But the form in which bids had to be set gave the impression to institutions that they were to see short courses for employees as importantly concerned with income-generation, thus decreasing dependence on public funding while simultaneously demonstrating responsiveness to the market. This apparent ambiguity (or complexity) within the overall policy intention of PICKUP appeared to cause problems for HE, with many institutions not clear as to whether their overall programme should be seeking to cover its costs or to make a net contribution to central funds. The wider the scope of the individual institutions's aspirations in relation to Continuing Education (ie, the larger its commitment to adult and community education, including Access courses), the more serious the dilemma appeared to be.

Although some reactions to the PICKUP experience were critical, other institutions reported that the funds had enabled developments which might well not have taken place without the incentive provided by the scheme. A typical response was the view in one polytechnic that while PICKUP had been stimulating, the short term nature of the funding presented serious problems. For example, it had proved difficult to appoint a PICKUP officer at a sufficiently senior level when the initial funding was only for one year. On a similar theme, a university reported that a smaller total sum over three years would have been more useful than the larger amount in three lumps. "It is the short term nature of the funds rather than the ear-marking that presents problems." Relatively short notice about the allocation of funds, and unhelpful time scales for the task of planning and staffing courses, seemed to be the basis of most complaints.

Respondents in several institutions commented on the rigours of the bidding process and the time it absorbed, particularly in view of the small sums involved. This was particularly true for those providers who already had a substantial involvement in the field. It was claimed in one place that each bid involved a month's work. In another, the Registrar was sceptical as to whether the amount of money available had been worth the trouble of getting it. But another acknowledged that formulating the bids had been a very good discipline and that PICKUP had achieved a big impact for a



small investment. Overall, the general impression was that, even where bids were unsuccessful, little was lost.

There were some complaints that the funds allocated did not meet the institutions' own priorities but rather reflected the policy preferences of the DES. More specific criticisms were that PICKUP was focused on people already in employment although there was (and is) an urgent need to cater for the unemployed and for others who require re-training in order to return to work; also that funds were restricted to researching a market and developing a product, whereas in some instances short course provision was waiting upon new equipment or various forms of institutional and staff development.

In a number of institutions the observation was made that the decision to bid for PICKUP funds had been prompted by a wish to maintain good relationships with government and with the relevant funding body. We have already encountered similar reactions to other government initiatives in earlier sections of this chapter and have concluded that categorical funding can elicit responses which do not necessarily imply acceptance of the policy intentions behind the scheme. Thus some of our case study institutions certainly gave the impression that they had been "going through the motions".

But despite the reservations and the uncomfortable experiences reported above, it seems likely that PICKUP has had a positive effect in terms of expanding and systematising the provision of short course programmes to industry. In virtually every institution visited, it was clear that the administrative arrangements for Continuing Education had been altered and considerably enhanced over the previous three years. Most had established some form of co-ordinating office, usually staffed partly with PICKUP funds. These offices are fulfilling both outward- and inward-facing functions. The outward function is concerned with gathering information about the needs of local employers, with disseminating information about what the institution can offer, and with building up contacts. The inward function is concerned with encouraging, supporting, standardising and regulating the provision of short courses internally. Help with the costing and pricing of courses is of central importance. The issue of credit accumulation and transfer is increasing in significance, with the polytechnics leading the way. Considerable areas of difficulty and widely diverse practice do exist : in relation to the allocation of overheads and 'profit' between central and departmental budgets ; over the matter of giving remuneration or other forms of recognition to academic staff who teach on short courses; and over the whole problem

of one-off courses and short-contract staffing. However, overall, it was clear from our visits that the whole issue of Continuing Education has taken on a new significance for HE and the contribution of PICKUP to that state of affairs, while hard to assess accurately, must be significant.

## **7.7 Discussion**

In the 1970s it was widely assumed that HE should be a publicly funded service. Government's task was to supply the resources to meet the Robbins principle that "courses of higher education should be available to all who were qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wanted to do so". Universities and polytechnics were left largely in control of their own academic policy and resource allocation procedures.

In the 1980s the expansionist times to which HE had grown accustomed came to an end. Public expenditure was no longer seen as an unqualified good. As a result government became far more concerned to determine which activities met its policy priorities and therefore which it would choose to fund. It therefore sought to encourage HE to diversify its sources of funding and to reduce its reliance on the public purse. With the re-election of a Conservative government for a fourth term from April 1992, this trend is likely to continue.

The initiatives examined in this chapter are all consistent with this policy. However, between them they represent only a small percentage of higher education income over the years in question. At most, the annual public spending on Alvey (£40m), ETP (£15m), EHE (£2m) and the IRCs (£20m) amounted to no more than 3% of the total recurrent income of HE institutions (CHES, August 1991; Williams, 1992).

The crucial question is therefore whether this investment of targetted funds has made a substantial impact upon HE. The conclusions drawn by the CHES research suggest that this is in fact the case. Evidence was found of significant impact on both teaching and research in both universities and polytechnics. This has occurred through four main mechanisms (Williams, 1992) : the injection of additional resources at a time of stringency ; the collaboration engendered within and between institutions and their academic staff ; the parallel collaboration with industrial and commercial organisations ; and the spin-offs from both new teaching programmes and new research activities for other aspects of institutional work. Beyond this, one might also point to the contribution these initiatives have made to the restructuring of administration

particularly in relation to financial responsibilities and decision making. And it could also be argued that they have significantly affected the capacity of HE to function in a more market orientated environment. As Williams concludes

*Overall the case studies show that the .... initiatives have had a marked effect on higher education institutions that extends well beyond the small percentage of recurrent funding that they accounted for.... They have certainly been instrumental in bringing about substantial change in British higher education.*

*(Williams, 1992, p 122)*

This conclusion reinforces arguments advanced earlier in this thesis concerning the capacity of well-targetted and administered categorical funding to make an impact beyond what, strictly speaking, it is paying for.

There have of course been problems. We heard many complaints about the time and cost of the bidding process. The CHES study concluded that between 1% and 7% of the resources made available are consumed by the bidding process itself. But although recommending clearer guidelines, better feed-back, and careful monitoring of the cost of bidding (and moreover suggesting that successful bidders should be allowed to recoup their costs), the general conclusion was that there are beneficial side-effects to the bidding process. A more serious problem may well exist around the short-term, stop-go nature of the funding which seems to fit poorly with the time horizons needed for responsible educational planning. Yet another problem concerns the whole concept of collaboration with other agencies, academic or industrial, which can prove more time-consuming than productive. But none of these problems seem to have been sufficiently serious to undermine the impact of the initiatives. It may be too early to decide whether this impact has been good, bad, or neutral in its effects.

One of the issues most entangled with such value questions concerns the autonomy of the HE institutions. In his book, which draws together the findings of the research programme, Williams says

*There appears to be little concern, even in universities, that the new funding mechanisms represent a serious infringement on institutional autonomy. For example in none of the case study institutions undertaking EHE initiatives was there any serious concern among senior staff about this issue. It was felt that these were activities in keeping with the academic mission of the institution, and that once the contract had been negotiated the monitoring and evaluation were legitimate accountability. Even the arguments about intellectual property rights in the Alvey and IRC programmes seem to have been more concerned with who has control of any cash generated than with issues of principle about open publication of research findings.*

*(Williams, 1992) p 122)*

However, elsewhere, he does refer to the strains created when "One is dealing with a situation, in institutions which pride themselves on their autonomy, in which an outside piper wants to have some say in the tunes being played ...".

There is no doubt that categorical funding has the capacity to invade autonomy and that where that commodity is prized, the intrusion will be resented, even resisted. The fact that we found little explicit protest may mean that autonomy is prized less than one might have assumed. Alternatively, it may mean that the academic community has not yet realised that the wall has been breached, or that it is fighting on so many fronts that it has yet to appreciate the overall strategy which underlies the campaign. Categorical funding, as in the school sector, represents a far more significant development in the task of policy implementation than a mere style of financial administration.

\* \* \* \* \*

The discussion above deals directly with issues that emerged from the CHES research programme. It would however have been equally appropriate to draw this chapter to an end by using the three broad headings employed in the two previous ones. For in these developments within the funding of HE, there is once again clear evidence of changing relationships within the system; of moves towards an "altered mandate" for higher education, predicated upon a 'productive' rather than an 'allocative' role for central government; and of significant shifts towards new patterns of policy formulation. But the link between the evidence provided and these lines of development are too clear to need further elaboration.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The case for the emergence of categorical funding for specific initiatives, and for its efficiency in translating policy into practice, has been set out at length in the preceding chapters. I do not intend to repeat the argument yet again here. Instead, I will discuss the significance of contract within education against the broader picture of social policy as a whole. I shall also re-assess the significance of what has been called here remunerative power at a time when government appears to have reinforced its claim on all four 'bases of power' as defined by Bacharach and Lawler, and discussed here both in Chapter 1 and subsequently. Finally, I shall conclude with some broader reflections upon the congruity of government by contract with the characteristics of a democratic society.

Norris has said of categorical funding that it is

*.... a financial instrument which can, under the right circumstances,  
achieve the effect of a statutory instrument where one does not exist.*  
(Norris, 1990, p63)

This comment seems to contain half the truth in that, as we have seen, categorical funding can result in a realisation of policy within an amazingly short space of time. Moreover, despite the fact that participation in many of the initiatives funded this way is seen as voluntary - no-one has to bid - they have proved effective in drawing in both the willing and the reluctant, thus achieving a universality in their effect which is similar to the impact of a statutory instrument. However, on the basis of the last chapters, my view would be that categorical funding represents a much more sophisticated form of control, and therefore power, than a straightforwardly coercive intervention. The reason for this is that while the statutory instrument instructs, the categorically funded project recruits. By drawing in those whose own private or vested interests relate to the policies funded, and by creating a discourse around the programmes concerned through the processes of criteria, bid and so forth, such programmes appear to create true believers (or at very least, participants who at first pretend to believe and then find themselves to be *de facto* converts). Yet another difference between such strategies and statutory instruments is directly attributable to the existence of the contract. It has been argued in the preceding chapters that a contract, especially where it is liable to re-negotiation on a regular basis, permits - indeed requires - ongoing administrative control experienced as monitoring, continuing visibility, and self-policing through the requirement to evaluate.

For a number of reasons, therefore, the Norris argument is less than complete. What we see in categorical funding is not only the means to create pseudo-statutory controls, but also the capacity to side-line all alternative programmes and perceptions. Through the relationships of dependency which are built into contractual arrangements, central government can virtually obliterate from the agenda any serious challenge (see Lukes, 1974, p24 and passim, on the "three-dimensional view of power" which recognises that "potential issues are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals' decisions).

In concluding this thesis, it is appropriate to note how in recent years the use of contractual funding in education has been paralleled throughout all areas of social policy. In some ways it is surprising that it was not until the late eighties that policy initiatives came to be expressed unequivocally in the language of contract because as a strategy, it grows quite naturally out of the Conservative preference for market economics. Keith Joseph frequently argued that the free market promotes the good of individuals; Skidelsky (1989) advocated the notion of a social market which "means that we turn to the market as a first resort and the government as a last resort, and not the other way round". To move beyond this sort of rhetoric into action almost requires the use of contract.

An early sign of this shift was the mounting pressure on local authorities during the eighties to put ancillary services out to competitive tendering, but this was at least partly intended as a curb on the profligate spending of left-wing councils. Within government itself, the major shift came with the publication of the Next Steps proposal (Jenkins, Caines and Jackson, 1988) which proposed that the executive functions of government should be carried out by independent agencies working within a specification and a budget determined by the government department concerned. There are now over seventy five such agencies: the aim is to complete the process by the end of 1993, leading to a substantial reduction in the number of civil servants.

In 1991, the Director of the Institute of Economic Affairs, Graham Mather, published a paper entitled Government by Contract. In it he argued that "treating government service provision as a series of contracts presents new opportunities to improve service standards, set explicit performance standards, and improve customer entitlements" (Mather, 1991). Such objectives "emphatically will not be secured by the traditional techniques of public service". Indeed Mather blames existing public institutions for sustaining a "servile society" and seeks to secure a more open, classless society through a shift towards "government by contract". His object is to

*to change the nature of government so that it rests explicitly on a series of contracts .... Instead of administering public service, civil servants should begin explicitly to meet the requirements of customers. Services should be specified in clear contractual terms ....* (p5)

*...separating policymakers from providers of services offers major opportunities to define more precisely and more frequently the range, nature and extent of public services.* (p8)

It is precisely this philosophy which is reflected in the Citizen's Charter, published four months later (Prime Minister, July 1991). The Charter argues, sector by sector, for a major shift to a system of "contracting out" services through a process of "competitive tendering". This means that, as in the private sector, those who manage can "concentrate on planning the future direction of service delivery and on setting quality standards and monitoring the service to ensure that the standard required is achieved"(p34). It is claimed that competition among service providers will benefit both the taxpayer and the consumer of services, whether the issue is rail services, housing, public cleansing, health services or schooling : a universal panacea, if ever there was one.

But this simple notion of the all-round advantages of the "purchaser-provider" model is not without its tensions. In the first place, there is a continuing contradiction between tight specification and managerial freedom. And in the second, there is the anomalous position of the third interest, namely the recipient of services. After all, it is the welfare of that interest which legitimises the whole business. Yet contract is best understood as an arrangement between two parties. There is much talk in the Citizen's Charter about customers, clients and consumers, and a number of references to choice. But if the manager who writes the specification and pays for the services is the purchaser, and if the contractor who tenders successfully is the provider, then the third interest group is at best a beneficiary rather than a free agent choosing his way through the market place.

This brief discussion of the use of contract across the range of social policy suggests that government has come to favour the remunerative base as the most efficient mechanism for implementing policy. It could even be argued that the need to regulate ( through statute and legislation has been substantially diminished, except in so far as such measures are used to create contract-dependent structures (consider, for example, recent NHS legislation). But is the story in the sphere of education different, for in the 1988 Act the government apparently opted for a huge expansion of its coercive powers? The analysis within this thesis would suggest that such a conclusion would be a

considerable over-simplification : I now turn to review those arguments and to consider their implications.

In the earlier, historical chapters it became clear that through the middle years of the twentieth century, central government made only partial use of the powers potentially available to it. This was partly because its aspirations to control the content of schooling varied in intensity, and partly because at various times it appeared to have lost some of its relative strength to other interest groups, notably the local authorities and/or the teachers. Given the broad consensus concerning the curriculum which existed at the time, it is not surprising that government was not particularly interested in extending its powers.

During the eighties however, it became increasingly apparent that the Conservative government had developed an educational ideology which could only be realised through the re-assertion and extension of central control over the system and over the curriculum itself. This intention co-incided with the development of bureaucratic and administrative practices which could be readily adapted (and indeed naturally favoured) a move towards increasing centralisation. We therefore experienced a decade during which government exploited all the forms of power available to it :

- **coercive power**, with a substantial increase in legislation and regulation;
- **remunerative power**, with greater control and limitation over public expenditure, accompanied by the adoption of contract or pseudo-contract for the funding of specific programmes;
- **power based on knowledge-as-information**, expressed as a pervasive demand to "know" the system through the collection of data and the increasing sophistication of monitoring;
- **power based on expertise**, derived from experimentation, research and argument derived from the government's own programmes, and the cultivation of new and friendly sources of authoritative commentary;
- and finally, **power based on normative influence**, whereby new opinion makers and practitioners are listened to, while old ones are discarded.

In the major part of this study, attention has been focussed on remunerative power. Chapter 4 expanded the definition offered in the earlier chapters in order to establish a model of what, it was argued, had become the dominant mode of resource allocation during the eighties, namely categorical funding characterised by the installation of contractual relationships. In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, the model was explored through a



series of illustrative studies to see how it worked in practice. The first part of this, the concluding chapter, went on to suggest that not only had categorical funding become the preferred mode for allocating funds to implement government policies, but also the concept of contract had become the symbol or metaphor for the relationship between the government and the governed. The process of separating funding and provision, in the mode advocated by Keith Joseph, has resulted in the assimilation of a fiscal element into the notion of social contract.

In the final pages I want to return to the question of why I chose to focus a thesis on these matters. First, it is worth repeating the reasons for not concentrating on the other bases of power. In the first place the coercive seemed less interesting, partly because to be effective, legislation and regulation need to be backed by other forms of power; partly because the imposition of policy in this style is less novel; and partly for the simple reason that the study was conceived before the rather sudden change of tack following the 1987 election, which resulted in the Education Reform Act and a multitude of lesser interventions. The other two options, power based on knowledge, and normative power, are both more subtle and evanescent and as such, would need a longer historical perspective for adequate analysis.

The positive reasons for choosing as I did were partly explained in Chapter 1 : the fusion of interest and opportunity led to an attempt to make sense of certain initiatives and resulted in an account which has had to be told in an order (*ordo demonstrandum*) which differs in many ways from the chronology of the thinking involved (*ordo inveniendum*). But the nature of the interest itself needs to be further explored. Why did I feel concerned about both the operation and the fact of contract as I observed it around me ?

Part of the explanation must surely relate to the apparent efficiency and economy of the process itself. Of course it would be wrong to argue that all categorically funded initiatives and programmes succeed in delivering the objectives of policy makers, entire and whole and perfect. Far from it. As an American management aphorism has it - "What we want is results, what we get is consequences". In many instances, contractees claim that the outcomes of a given programme are a set of consequences shaped by their own aspirations and intentions, and are not necessarily the "results" envisaged in the original policy objectives. Nevertheless such claims are often made by those who fail to recognise the extent to which they have been consciously or unconsciously recruited to the objectives of the policy, using its language, adopting its values, while busying themselves with personalising the details of local

implementation. Categorical funding has undoubtedly brought about change, very largely in line with government intentions, and with a speed and effectiveness rarely seen in the broad field of social policy. What is more, it has changed the ethos and the expectations as to how things are done among the various parties (partners is a word now honoured only in the rhetoric) within the education system.

Thus efficiency was itself intriguing. We do not have an elected government in order that it should prove incompetent in devising and then in implementing policy : there is an undeniable virtue in the capacity to make things happen. But simultaneously, that very efficiency can seem repellent. It took some time to realise that to understand my fundamental distaste for contract as a basis for policy implementation would inevitably lead beyond an analysis of how it worked and what impact, good or bad, it had had. Questions therefore need to be asked about whether contract is a legitimate tool for the policy-maker in a democratic society. Effective and efficient, certainly. But legitimate ? That is more problematic.

The basis for this distaste was not easy to determine. For some time I thought it rested on a commitment to a certain concept of teacher professionalism. I was convinced - and still am - that educational programmes must, within bounds, be designed within, and not prior to, educational encounters. Teaching and learning are essentially an inter-active process. The teacher brings knowledge of the content and procedures of the material that is to be learned, together with accumulated experience of the teaching-learning process ; the learner, in a good learning environment, brings motivation, interest, and the possibility of an unanticipated and challenging response. Each encounter is in a real sense unique ; and so is the context in which it occurs. The over-determination of the curriculum by external authorities (and this can be secured through contract) therefore damages the whole undertaking.

A paper by Goodson (1990) recalls the description by Edmond Holmes of the dismal effects of the 'payment-by-results' policy of the years between 1862 and 1895 under which schools were examined yearly by HMI. Holmes wrote

*On the official report which followed this examination depended the reputation and financial prosperity of the teacher ...*

*The consequent pressure on the teacher to exert himself was well-nigh irresistible ; and he had no choice but to transmit that pressure to his subordinates and his pupils. The result was that in those days the average school was a hive of industry.*

*But it was also a hive of mis-directed energy. The State, in prescribing a syllabus which was to be followed, in all the subjects of instruction, by all the schools in the country, without regard to local or personal considerations, was guilty of one capital offence. It did all his thinking for the teacher. It told him in precise detail what he was to do each year in each 'Standard', how he was to handle each subject, and how far he was to go in it .... In other words, it provided him with his ideals, his general conceptions, his more immediate aims, his schemes of work ; and if it did not control his methods in all their details, it gave him (by implication) hints and suggestions with regard to these on which he was not slow to act ; for it told him that the work done in each class and in each subject would be tested at the end of each year by a careful examination of each individual child ; and it was inevitable that in his endeavour to adapt his teaching to the type of question which his experience of the yearly examination led him to expect, he should gradually deliver himself, mind and soul, into the hands of the officials of the Department, the officials at Whitehall who framed the yearly syllabus, and the officials in the various districts who examined on it.*

*What the Department did to the teacher, it compelled him to do the child....*

*(Holmes, 1911, p 103-4)*

But despite these strong words, which have a remarkable topicality more than eighty years after they were written, any argument which rests upon a concept of teacher professionalism as the basis for concern about the manipulative use of contract in the field of educational policy is hard to sustain. First, it implies a lack of sympathy with the view that teachers are not uniquely qualified to define the aims of education. For after all, the way we want to educate our children is nothing less than our judgement about what their adult lives can and should be ; and John White (1979) has convincingly argued that teachers have no right to pre-empt this choice on behalf of society as a whole. Thus there are compelling reasons why teachers' autonomy should be exercised within a framework constrained by socially agreed goals and subject to appropriate forms of accountability.

A second problem with the teacher professionalism argument is that logically one would have to extend it to the full spectrum of professional, semi-professional and maybe even, all trained and qualified people. That would mean that social workers, doctors, lawyers, policemen, bankers, civil engineers and even electricians should be able to make unique decisions in their working environment, because they can claim to understand it as no-one else can and because each encounter will differ in some way from all others. Yet clearly, in any society all such people need to be regulated and the general direction of their activities subjected to public scrutiny and regulation. In all these cases we are quick to complain when such controls appear to break down.

So, to account for my 'distaste', the angle of my argument has to be widened beyond the issue of teacher professionalism, significant though that is. The focus has clearly to be the nature of democratic society itself, and of democratic education within it. And that must inevitably include questions about the role of the political and bureaucratic élite within that society.

In this area, the work of Etzioni-Halevy is very helpful. She writes

*... the manner in which political and bureaucratic elites exert their power is of the first order of importance for the preservation and promotion of democracy. And democracy, in turn, is worth preserving and promoting as it is the most effective framework for decreasing political inequalities and enhancing political freedom. ....At the same time democracies are exceedingly fragile, beset by internal strains and contradictory requirements..... These inconsistencies present both political and bureaucratic elites with the constant temptation of slipping into less regulated ways of wielding power, of becoming less democratic as they go along. The task is therefore to preserve the regulation of elite power already achieved and to press for the further curbing of that power.*

*(Etzioni-Halevy, 1983, pp 4-5)*

The argument above is acutely relevant to the content of this thesis which has been concerned with the manner in which power has been exerted, and has seen that process "slipping into less regulated ways". That of course is not to imply that categorical-funding operates without rules of its own : much of the last three chapters have been about just such procedural matters. Nevertheless the argument has been that the use of contractual and quasi-contractual methods of resource allocation has enabled a much more comprehensive control over policy related programmes.

Much of Etzioni-Halevy's book is devoted to looking at tensions between bureaucracy and democracy and between bureaucratic and political elites. Of the former she hypothesises that bureaucracy poses a dilemma for democracy (and vice-versa).

*Bureaucracy has in fact increased its power because the modern state, in its expanding capacity of monitoring the economy and of providing a greater variety of services to the public and especially in its expanding capacity as a welfare state, is in charge of allocating ever-growing resources.*

*(Because of this) growing pervasiveness of all bureaucracies, as well as the evolving technology of ever more sophisticated devices of collecting, storing and retrieving ever larger amounts of information, ... bureaucracy has increasingly gained the potential of encroaching on the autonomy, liberty, and privacy of the individual - immunities which are of the very essence of democracy.*

*(op cit, pp 89-90)*

Yet a powerful bureaucracy is at the same time a necessity for democracy. Just because the modern state is so concerned with the distribution of huge resources, it "must have at its disposal an organisation that will not only allocate the resources but will do so by non-partisan criteria" (p91), something which would be very difficult for electorally vulnerable politicians.

Categorical funding enables politicians to increase the possibility of passing out resources in such a way as to achieve partisan policy objectives. Such techniques result in the distinction between bureaucratic and political elites becoming more blurred as political decisions are fused into administrative and executive strategies. This perhaps explains why, in much discussion here and elsewhere about educational policy, there is often considerable ambiguity as to whether the term 'DES' refers to a political or a bureaucratic function.

It has been suggested that under the Conservative administration the Civil Service has become more politicised. It has also shrunk numerically as the Next Steps policy has resulted in the hiving off of more and more functions to self-administering, semi-independent agencies. But the operation of contract between each of these agencies and the government, which is their chief pay-master, has enabled the control function to survive the apparent dismemberment of bureaucracy.

I now return to the argument that there is a pressing need to curb the power of both political and bureaucratic elites in order to preserve "fragile" democracy and to safeguard the "autonomy, liberty and privacy of the individual" which were described as "of the very essence of democracy". To investigate these statements further we have to look at the question of what it is to live in a democratic society.

Etzioni-Halevy's own definition of democracy is disappointingly narrow.

*...(an) institutional arrangement whereby two or more organised groups of people (or parties) participate in the contest for power (or for elite positions) on the strength of their advocated policies and/or their projected images and whereby they acquire such posts on the basis of free elections..*  
(p 86)

This is fundamentally a political definition which does not seem wholly adequate to justify other of her statements which appear to address wider questions about the quality of life. To encompass that we need a more philosophical definition.

To choose one from the enormous body of scholarship in this field is undoubtedly arbitrary but an extended excursus into political philosophy at this point would be

foolish. The use of only one such theory is to be excused on the grounds that it seems peculiarly appropriate to the argument.

A broader and more socially comprehensive definition comes from the work of the Canadian political philosopher, McPherson. In an essay entitled The Maximization of Democracy, he argues that within modern attempts to produce a theory which can justify democracy, there are two main claims : "the claim to maximise individual utilities and the claim to maximise individual powers" (1971, p 4). The first of these is the heir to nineteenth century Utilitarianism : on that view democracy is a system which aggregates individual satisfactions but does so in a way which is equitable in so far as it endeavours to provide each with that to which to he is entitled. Such a view sees man as essentially a consumer of utilities. The second claim is one that pre-dates the Utilitarianism of Locke, Bentham and James Mill, and was revived in the liberal-democratic theory of John Stuart Mill and T.H.Green. McPherson describes it thus :

*The second claim is that the liberal-democratic society maximises men's human powers, that is, their potential for using and developing their uniquely human capacities. This claim is based on a view of man's essence not as a consumer of utilities but as a doer, a creator, an enjoyer of his human attributes. These attributes may be variously listed and assessed: they may be taken to include the capacity for rational understanding, for moral judgement and action, for aesthetic creation or contemplation, for the emotional activities of friendship and love, and, sometimes, for religious experience. Whatever the uniquely human attributes are taken to be, in this view of man their exertion and development are seen as ends in themselves, not simply a means to consumer satisfactions. It is better to travel than to arrive. Man is not a bundle of appetites seeking satisfaction but a bundle of conscious energies seeking to be exerted.*

*(McPherson, 1971, p 5)*

But, argues McPherson, by the time such ideas had returned to the centre of political philosophy, the Utilitarian concept was deeply rooted in the realities of a modern market society, with the result that we are left in the twentieth century with a form of democratic theory which is a hybrid of the two traditions.

This argument about the duality of democratic theory throws a useful light on the subject of this thesis. The ideology of late twentieth century Conservatism, with its emphasis on the virtues of the market and the competitive ethos has a bias towards the satisfaction of individual appetites and choices. It has espoused the kind of political theory which, McPherson claims, "offer(s), as realism, a savage revision, almost obliteration, of the democratic content of traditional liberal-democratic theory, with a view to re-formulating its liberal market content" (op cit, p 76).

The influence of Professor Friedman on Conservative thinking in the eighties is uncontested. McPherson, in an essay written in 1968, was already anticipating the implications for democracy of Friedman's economics.

*In asserting ... that freedom of the individual, or perhaps of the family, is the liberal's 'ultimate goal in judging social arrangements', (Friedman) has said in effect that the liberal is not required seriously to weigh the ethical claims of equality (or any other principle of distribution), let alone the claims of any principle of individual human development such as was given first place by liberals like Mill and Green...*  
(op cit, p 156)

The link with the practice of categorical funding and the establishment of contractual relationships for the delivery of social policies is now clear. The evidence in the past chapters points to the effectiveness of such arrangements in moulding the actions and ultimately the values of the contractee to those of the policy-maker. They permit detailed intervention and promote self-policing. We must therefore conclude that they are effective to the point of manipulation, and they thus constrain the ability of individuals whose activities are caught up in such arrangements from exercising their powers, from using and developing their human capacities for rational understanding, for judgement and for action. They therefore serve to diminish rather than to extend liberal-democratic principles within society.

But against that conclusion, one might argue that a notion of democratic society which allows an individual teacher to develop his powers in a manner which might damage pupils and students is in no way defensible. In recent years this view has been widespread among critics of the education system, and not without some justification.

The problem here concerns the rationale for a due measure of professional freedom. Such arguments as have been produced in the past have tended to be pragmatic, concerned with the planning and implementation of the curriculum (see Skilbeck, 1984, chapter 1, for a succinct summary). Most have emerged from studies of planned curriculum development which appeared to suggest the persistent failure of RD and D and other forms of centre-periphery strategies. But to counter arguments about the dangers of individual teacher preference, what is needed is a theory which grounds the case for professional independence not in the exigencies of practice (for practice can change and be changed), but rather in a wider notion about the role of teachers in a democratic society. Clearly such a theory will encompass McPherson's developmental concept but it will do so in a way which stresses the social as well as the individual case for expanding a theory of democracy beyond the maximisation of individual liberties.

One writer who has attempted to resolve this problem is Amy Gutmann. In her book, Democratic Education (1987), she produces a strong definition of democracy :

*democracy is a political ideal - of a society whose adult members are, and continue to be, equipped by their education and authorized by political structures to share in ruling. Democratic societies must therefore prevent majorities (as well as minorities) from repressing critical inquiry or restricting political access.* (page xi)

The means by which adult members are to share in ruling is through the process of deliberation:

*Rational deliberation remains the form of freedom most suitable to a democratic society in which adults must be free to deliberate and disagree but constrained to secure the intellectual grounds for deliberation and disagreement among children.* (p 45)

Thus

*... the development of deliberative character is essential to realizing the ideal of a democratically sovereign society ...* (p 52)

*.... a democratic state must aid children in developing the capacity to understand and to evaluate competing conceptions of the good life and the good society .... To integrate the value of critical deliberation among good lives, we must defend some principled limits on political and parental authority over education, limits that in practice require parents and states to cede some educational authority to professional educators.* (p 44)

Gutmann is therefore arguing that it is the prime responsibility of teachers to inculcate in their students the habit and capacity of independent, critical thought about the society in which they live. One might suppose that teachers who are tied to a concept of education which can be summed up in the term 'delivery' - of a pre-ordained curriculum or of a negotiated contract - cannot hope to model for their students the very characteristics that a democratic theory of education requires them to foster. By restraining their 'powers', through remunerative as well as coercive and other strategies, we thus restrain the powers of young people to develop into what they might otherwise be.

Gutmann includes in her analysis an account of what goes wrong when democratic deliberation is repressed :

*Citizens and public officials can use democratic processes to destroy democracy. They can undermine the intellectual foundations of future democratic deliberations by implementing educational policies which either repress unpopular (but rational) ways of thinking or exclude some future citizens from an education adequate for participating in democratic politics.* (p 14)



Where such repression and exclusion result in the curtailment of proper professional freedom, the results are dire :

*When democratic control over .. schools is so absolute as to render teachers unable to exercise intellectual discretion in their work,  
(1) few independent-minded people are attracted to teaching,  
(2) those who are attracted are frustrated in their attempts to think creatively and independently, and  
(3) those who either willingly or reluctantly conform to the demands of democratic authority teach an undemocratic lesson to their students - of intellectual deference to democratic society.* (p 80)

These quotations from Gutmann's book have been re-ordered in the interests of condensing a complex argument into a form which can be incorporated here ; nevertheless they resonate completely with my concerns about the use of categorical funding in the form of contract to bring about the implementation of government educational policy. It is the very potency of this strategy, - its efficiency, effectiveness and economy - which is distasteful ; and the reason is that it is not consistent with the character of democratic society.

We are living through a period in which politicians have abrogated to themselves the right to be 'educational experts', or at least the right to express 'common sense' views about education which they argue are preferable to those which come from professional teachers. This has apparently legitimised their right to make authoritative statements on almost any aspect of educational practice from the teaching of reading, and writing, the choice of a literary canon and the place of course-work in public examinations. And in turn this has led to the use of central government powers to convert those views into policy and programmes which preclude disagreement, dissent and even serious criticism. Yet, as Gutmann says,

*The most distinctive feature of a democratic theory of education is that it makes a democratic virtue out of our inevitable disagreement over educational problems.* (op cit, p 11)

It is my view that categorical funding, as an extraordinarily effective mechanism for the implementation of policy, seriously curtails and even silences legitimate disagreement. It is therefore inimical to any generous and optimistic understanding of what education for a democratic society might look like.

## **GLOSSARY**

<b>ABRC</b>	: Advisory Board for the Research Councils
<b>ACSET</b>	: Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers
<b>ACSTT</b>	: Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers
<b>AEB</b>	: Associated Examination Board
<b>AEC</b>	: Association of Education Committees
<b>APU</b>	: Assessment of Performance Unit
<b>CAC</b>	: Central Advisory Council
<b>CASE</b>	: Campaign for the Advancement of State Education
<b>CATE</b>	: Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
<b>CCCS</b>	: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies
<b>CDT</b>	: Craft Design Technology
<b>CEE</b>	: Certificate of Extended Education
<b>(C)EO</b>	: (Chief) Education Officer
<b>CHES</b>	: Centre for Higher Education Studies
<b>CP</b>	: Community Programme
<b>CPVE</b>	: Certificate of Pre-vocational Education
<b>CSE</b>	: Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>CVCP</b>	: Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
<b>DES</b>	: Department of Education and Science
<b>DoE</b>	: Department of the Environment
<b>ED</b>	: Employment Department
<b>EEC</b>	: European Economic Community
<b>EHE</b>	: Enterprise in Higher Education
<b>ERA</b>	: Education Reform Act
<b>ESEA</b>	: Elementary and Secondary Education Act (USA)
<b>ESG</b>	: Education Support Grant(s)
<b>ESRC</b>	: Economic and Social Research Council
<b>ETP</b>	: Engineering and Technology Programme
<b>ETS</b>	: Employment Training Scheme
<b>FE</b>	: Further Education
<b>FEU</b>	: Further Education Unit
<b>GCE</b>	: General Certificate of Education
<b>GCSE</b>	: General Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>GEST</b>	: Grants for Education Support and Training
<b>GRE</b>	: Grant Related Expenditure
<b>GRIDS</b>	: Guidelines for Review and Internal Development in Schools
<b>GRIST</b>	: Grant Related In-Service Training
<b>HE</b>	: Higher Education

<b>HEI</b>	: Higher Education institutions
<b>HMI</b>	: Her Majesty's Inspector(ate)
<b>INSET</b>	: In-Service Education and Training
<b>IRC</b>	: Interdisciplinary Research Centres
<b>IT</b>	: Information Technology
<b>LEA</b>	: Local Education Authority
<b>LEATGS</b>	: Local Education Authority Training Grant Scheme
<b>LPA</b>	: Local Priority Area
<b>MSC</b>	: Manpower Services Commission
<b>NAB</b>	: National Advisory Body (for Public Sector Higher Education)
<b>NAFE</b>	: Non-advanced Further Education
<b>NAGM</b>	: National Association of Governors and Managers
<b>NCC</b>	: National Curriculum Council
<b>NCVQ</b>	: National Council for Vocational Qualifications
<b>NFER</b>	: National Foundation for Educational Research
<b>NPA</b>	: National Priority Area
<b>NSG</b>	: National Steering Group (of TVEI)
<b>OECD</b>	: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PAR</b>	: Programme Analysis Review
<b>PESC</b>	: Public Expenditure Survey Committee
<b>PGCE</b>	: Postgraduate Certificate in Education
<b>PICKUP</b>	: Professional, Industrial and Commercial Updating Programme
<b>PPB(S)</b>	: Planning Programme Budgeting (System)
<b>ROSLA</b>	: Raising of the School Leaving Age
<b>RSG</b>	: Rate Support Grant
<b>TRIST</b>	: TVEI-Related In-Service Training
<b>SCDC</b>	: School Curriculum Development Committee
<b>SEAC</b>	: School Examination and Assessment Council
<b>SEC</b>	: Secondary Examination Council
<b>SERC</b>	: Science and Engineering Research Council
<b>SSPRU</b>	: Social Science Policy Research Unit
<b>SSEC</b>	: Secondary School Examination Council
<b>TA</b>	: Training Agency
<b>TES</b>	: Times Educational Supplement
<b>TVEI</b>	: Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
<b>UGC</b>	: University Grants Committee
<b>WEEP</b>	: Work Experience on Employers' Premises
<b>WEP</b>	: Work Preparation
<b>YOP</b>	: Youth Opportunity Programme
<b>YTS</b>	: Youth Training Scheme

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